

CHANGING THE WINDS OF PARADISE: CONFRONTING
AL QAEDA'S IDEOLOGY OF MARTYRDOM

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STRATEGY

by

JAMES H. FITZGERALD III, MAJ, USA
B.A., The Citadel, Charleston, SC, 1986

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Name of Candidate: MAJ James H. Fitzgerald III

Thesis Title: Changing the Winds of Paradise: Confronting Al Qaeda's Ideology of Martyrdom

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
LTC (Ret.) Richard A. Olsen, D.Min.

_____, Member
LTC (Ret.) John N. Cary, M.A.

_____, Member
COL (Ret.) Jeffrey D. Vordermark, M.A.

Accepted this 15th day of June 2007 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the US Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

CHANGING THE WINDS OF PARADISE: CONFRONTING AL QAEDA'S IDEOLOGY OF MARTYRDOM, by Major James H. Fitzgerald III, 100 pages.

Suicide terrorism is reemerging as the dominant tactic in asymmetric warfare. Al Qaeda in association with affiliates in the greater Salafi-jihadi movement conduct suicide terror or martyrdom campaigns against strategic and operational targets. Martyrdom operations are the keystone of Al Qaeda's ideology and serve as a unifying tenet of the global Salafi-jihadi insurgency.

This study will examine the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) within the context of a transnational or global insurgency fueled by an extreme Islamic ideology propagated by Al Qaeda; seek to correlate the relationship between Al Qaeda's "martyrdom operations" and radical Islamic doctrinal principles and understand the differences between strategic "martyrdom operations" against the "far enemy" exemplified by the attacks of 11 September 2001, and the operational martyrdom operations conducted in Iraq to facilitate the collapse of the state.

The analysis highlights the threat Al Qaeda and Associated Movements through the insurgency pose to the US and its interests. Salafi-jihadi organizations demonstrate the intent of attacking US interest and more ominously, the capability with a martyrdom campaign. Success in the GWOT depends on neutralizing the multifaceted impact of Al Qaeda's martyrdom operations.

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ACRONYMS

AQAM	Al Qaeda and Associated Movements
COA	Course(s) of Action
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
JP	Joint Publication
US	United States
WMD/E	Weapons of Mass Destruction / Effect

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

How I wish I could be with you taking part in those stimulating discussions as the winds of paradise blow and the swords of jihad clash....Martyrdom operations on the soil of the Peninsula against Christians and Jews will arouse the Arab Islamic spirit the world knows and history keeps in its records of the past.¹

Hassan al-Tajiki, "Five Letters to the Africa Corps"

Al Qaeda and Suicide Terror

Suicide terror is reemerging as a popular terror tactic with global impact.

Adaptive organizations, such as Al Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM), are applying suicide tactics, also called "martyrdom operations", against global economic, political, and social targets to achieve operational or strategic objectives. Suicide terror attacks have significantly increased in both frequency and lethality in recent years. Figure 1 displays the near exponential increase in suicide attacks from 1997 through 2006. Since 1997 with the exception of 2000 and 2006, suicide attacks increased in number annually at a minimum rate of 14 percent in 2003 to a high of 360 percent in 2001.² A 2003 Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, *Terrorist and Suicide Attacks*, reported suicide attacks from 1980 to 2001 accounted for only 3 percent of the total number of terrorist attacks worldwide but produced almost 50 percent of all the terror related fatalities.³ Additionally, the Iraqi insurgency produced 443 suicide attacks from 22 March 2003 to 20 February 2006.⁴

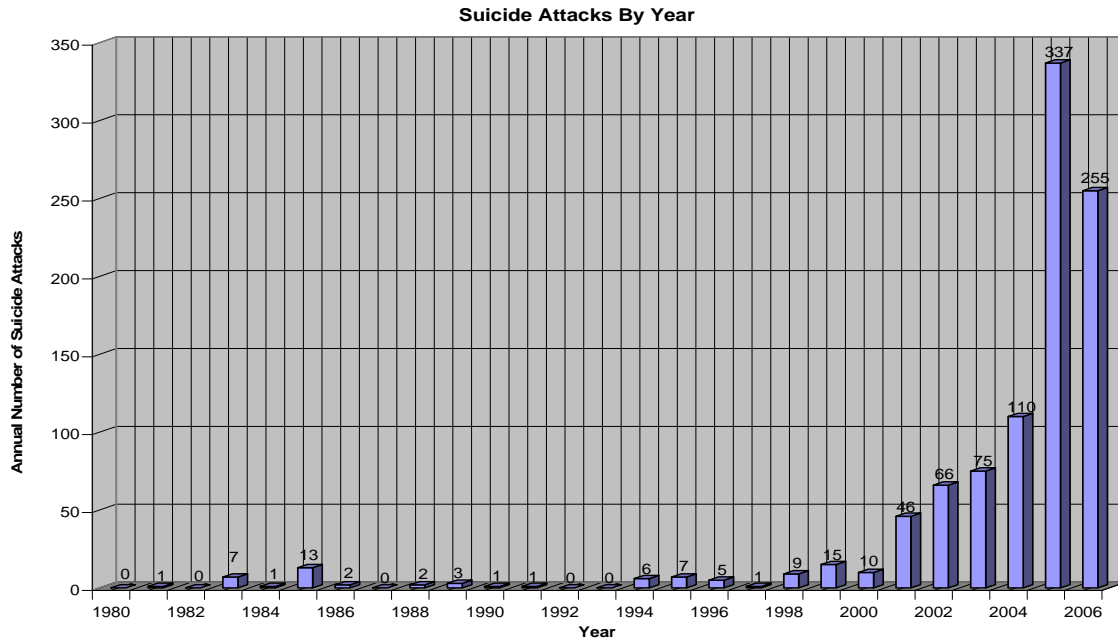


Figure 1. Increase in Suicide Attacks, 1980-2006

Source: Data, MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, Terror Incident by Date Analysis Tools: Suicide Attack / Terror Attacks, 1 January 1980 through 31 December 2006.

Until the 1998 attacks on the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, suicide terror campaigns were traditionally localized operations supporting terrorist organization's local or regional political objectives. However, many terrorist organizations with wider strategic ambitions recognize the effectiveness of this tactic. Al Qaeda's spiritual leader, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri emphasized suicide tactics in his book, *Knights under the Prophet's Banner*, published around the time of the 11 September 2001 attacks. He provided Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist very specific guidance for targeting and tactics:

Choosing the Targets and Concentrating on the Martyrdom Operations: The mujahid Islamic movement must escalate its methods of strikes and tools of resisting the enemies. . . . In this regard we will concentrate on the following: The need to inflict the maximum casualties against the opponent. . . . The need to concentrate on the method of martyrdom operations as the most successful way of

inflicting damage against the opponent and the least costly to the mujahidin in terms of casualties.⁵

Terrorist organizations affiliated with AQAM simultaneously conduct suicide or martyrdom operations along both strategic and operational lines of operations. Foreign *jihadists* employ suicide attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan in an effort to expel coalition forces and facilitate system collapse. These terrorists seek to set the conditions for the emergence of an Islamic state and establish a base to propagate *jihad* until all the apostate regimes in the region are toppled and regional dominance is established supporting the *Salafi-jihadi* strategic endstate. In the case of Iraq, an extremist Islamic state would significantly extend the strategic reach of the AQAM to neighboring Saudi Arabia and Jordan; and in Afghanistan, the reach could influence Pakistan to include Kashmir and the Muslim populations in the east Caspian region to include Chechnya. This operational application of martyrdom operations supports and is effectively linked to AQAM's strategic endstate.

The National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism, published by the Department of Defense in February 2006, defined the current threat as:

a transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals – and their state and non-state supporters – which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism for ideological ends. The Al Qa'ida Associated Movement (AQAM), comprised of al Qa'ida and affiliated extremists, is the most dangerous present manifestation of such extremism.⁶

Table 3 outlines the terrorist organizations currently known or suspected to be affiliated with Al Qaeda. *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, published in September 2006, mentioned suicide bombing only in the context of the many atrocities committed by terrorists and implied the tactic is directly related to Islamic ideology. The significance of this implication is substantial in that it frames the nature of the threat the US faces in

the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). A threat, within the context of the GWOT, is best defined as a terrorist organization with both the capability and intent to threaten the US or its interests. As the greatest threat to US interests within the GWOT framework, AQAM does subscribe to extremist Islamic ideology.

The AQAM is not monolithic but consists of numerous extremist factions committed to violently destroying the existing governments in Muslim countries and replacing them with a traditional Islamic state governed by the principles of *shari'a* law. There are many shades in the spectrum of Islamist groups. Islamists and Islamic Fundamentalists in general subscribe to the concept of *shari'a* law as the legal basis of government for a state if that state is to be considered Islamic, but do not necessarily endorse the violent overthrow of existing governments. Other radical or extremist factions look to establish their form of Islamic government through local insurgencies but do not necessarily seek a regional or global *Ummah* (Islamic community). Many factions in these categories are revivalist and believe in returning to the “golden age of Islam” by observing and practicing Islam not only as a religion but as a political and social system. The first three generations of Muslims who collected the philosophies and sayings attributed to Muhammad (the *Hadith*) and established the basis of Islamic jurisprudence or *shari'a* law are considered the *Salaf*. Modern *Salafists*, practitioners of literal or orthodox “pure” Islam, attempt to emulate and promote the practices of the early rightful followers of Mohammad’s traditions. *Wahab* traditions originate from Saudi Arabia but share a similar puritanical perspective for the practice of Islam. This study will concentrate on the most extreme of those factions, those who subscribe to the *Salafis*’ view of traditional Islam seeking to emulate Mohammad’s governance and who also

believe in spreading Islam through violence, and the return to preeminence. These extremists justify their violence through their definition of *jihad*. The term *jihad* literally means “struggle for the sake of Allah (God);” however, the concept is often divided between the internal struggle, or “greater *jihad*” and the “lesser *jihad*,” or fight to bring Islam to all mankind. Contrary to popular belief, *jihad* is not “holy war.” *Harb*, as in *Dar al-Harb* (house of war) is the contextual and literal word for war. *Jihad* is more accurately a holy obligation for struggle, or more commonly represented as struggle for justice or “just war.” Extremists promote the “lesser *jihad*” as the justification for the violent submission of mankind for the sake of Islam. Muslims participating in this just war are *Salafi-jihadist* or *Salafi-jihadi* and their movement, characterized by Al Qaeda, complies with the Joint doctrine definition for insurgency: “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict.”⁷ Therefore AQAM’s transnational *jihad* can also be defined as the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency.

The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism does not mention suicide terror as a tactic or strategy requiring countermeasures, despite the evidence of its influence. As a tactic, suicide terror is cost effective, reasonably precise, difficult to counter, and capable of operational or strategic effects. In an audio tape message transmitted 27 December 2004 by the Al-jazeera Arab television network, Usama bin Ladin clearly linked this tactic to Al Qaeda’s strategic ends:

You should become diligent in carrying out martyrdom operations; these operations, praise be to Allah, have become a great source of terror for the enemy. They have perturbed its movement, frustrated its plans, and challenged its weapons and soldiers. These are the most important operations.⁸

Suicide attacks destabilize target environments and inflict far reaching and devastating psychological effects upon target audiences. Suicide attacks, more often than not, differentiate between the victim and target as two separate entities. The victims receive the deadly impact of a suicide attack and the targets receive the psychological effects of the resolute engagement. Each suicide attack reminds the target audience that the cause of the perpetrators supersedes the social value of human life. Western societies confronted with suicide attacks struggle with the rationale of such brutal tactics. All traditional principles of deterrence through threat of punishment or retaliation are rendered meaningless when the enemy intentionally exacts the ultimate personal price through his or her attack. As a result, most “civilized societies” erroneously portray a committed, competent and capable enemy as freedom-hating evil psycho-paths with no regard for life. Such characterizations are incorrect and erroneously influence countermeasure development.

Suicide terror is not exclusive to Islamic fundamentalists. Secular nationalists, such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of Sri Lanka, led the world in suicide attacks from 1980 through 2000, using them as instruments of insurgency and of revolution for local independence. The Tamil Tigers assassinated both the President of Sri Lanka, Ranasinghe Premadasa, in 1993 and the former India Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, by suicide attacks. The Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK), best described as a “Marxist secessionist movement,” conducted 16 suicide attacks, three confirmed and five suspected women bombers, in Turkey from 1996 through 1999 seeking Kurdish autonomy. The phenomenon of female suicide bombers pioneered by the secular Syrian Socialist National Party (SSNP/PPS) in Lebanon, followed by the LTTE and PKK, and

most recently proliferated into the ranks of Chechen rebels, the Palestinian al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and Hamas. Islamic clerics acknowledge the duty of *jihad* does not extend to women but some *jihadi* leaders welcome their committed engagements. The use of women suicide terrorists further illustrates the adaptive and pragmatic nature of organizations and groups using suicide terror. Such organizations can and do effectively respond to traditional countermeasures, such as profiling, by adjusting targets and delivery systems and still achieve significant effects.

Primary and Secondary Research Questions

Suicide terror is the dominant tactic in asymmetric warfare, balancing the powers between militarily strong forces with a considerably smaller or weaker force. This research will examine, within a strategic and operational context, the threat of suicide terrorism to the US, and apply the principles of operational art and design to develop countermeasures. This analysis will frame AQAM's martyrdom operations within the contemporary operating environment of the GWOT. The operational elements of end state and objectives, effects, center of gravity, lines of operations, and leverage, are central to developing suicide terror countermeasures. The primary research question is: Can the US counter Al Qaeda's martyrdom operations? The research will focus on AQAM's represented in the *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* and defines the threat through capabilities and intent.

The purpose of this research is to examine AQAM's strategic and operational martyrdom campaigns and recommend countermeasures to mitigate their effects on US interests. Do Al Qaeda martyrdom operations pose a threat to the US and its interests?

What role do martyrdom operations play in AQAM's strategy? How does AQAM employ martyrdom operations or suicide terrorism? Who conducts these suicide campaigns? What is the nature of the conflict in which Al Qaeda and affiliates conduct martyrdom operations? What are the implications for future US security strategy? Al Qaeda in association with affiliates in the greater *Salafi-jihadi* movement conduct suicide terror, or martyrdom campaigns against strategic and operational targets. Martyrdom operations are the keystone of Al Qaeda's ideology and serve as a unifying tenet of the global *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency.

Hypothesis

AQAM significantly changed the historical paradigm of suicide terrorism. The hypothesis for this research is that Al Qaeda and the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency center of gravity, or ultimate source of power and strength, is their ideology. Suicide terrorism, or more specifically, martyrdom operations, are critical capabilities simultaneously empowered by reinforcing the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency center of gravity. Strategic and operational martyrdom operations have specific critical requirements and incur critical vulnerabilities. Bringing the correct effects to bear on these vulnerabilities would mitigate Al Qaeda and Associated Movements martyrdom operations and significantly disrupt the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency as a whole.

Assumptions

AQAM have internationalized suicide terrorism through a resonate ideology and target the West and the US in particular. As the *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* identifies Al Qaeda and affiliated extremists as posing the greatest

threat to the US, this research will assume AQAM also poses the greatest suicide attack threat to the US and its interests. Further, AQAM members are Islamic ideologues or at the very least ascribe to extreme Islamic ideology for the conduct of their operations. Al Qaeda's ideology concentrates on the key religious principals of the absolute sovereignty of God, the duty to spread the faith, and the duty of struggle in the service of God. Suicide terror is terrorism. This assumption may appear to be a statement of the obvious but there are times that the issue may become blurred and subject to interpretation. However, for this paper, AQAM will be described as engaging in a violent transnational insurgency to depose the constitutional governments of key nations, disrupt or destroy western influence in the Islamic world, and establish an Islamic nation or confederation of Islamic states under the rule of *shari'a* law or orthodox Islamic jurisprudence based on the Quran, *Hadith*, and *Sunna*. Suicide terror or suicide operations are an idiosyncratic tactic of asymmetrical warfare used to achieve the political, military, social, or economic objectives of the insurgency. When coupled with the logic of the thesis, suicide terror becomes a "strategic tactic."

Definitions

The language to describe elements of terrorism and insurgency affect the perception of the audience. Words do matter and the definitions of terrorism, martyr, tactics, and strategy, all come with connotations that can undermine effective analysis. The broad general definition of strategy according to the JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, is useful to describe national level plans: "The art and science of developing and employing instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational

objectives.”⁹ Tactics are: “The employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other.”¹⁰ The use of variations on the term strategic in this thesis refers to the national level of war or impact on national objectives:

The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to accomplish these objectives. Activities at this level establish national and multinational military objectives; sequence initiatives; define limits and assess risks for the use of military and other instruments of national power; develop global plans or theater war plans to achieve these objectives; and provide military forces and other capabilities in accordance with strategic plans.¹¹

Therefore a strategic threat would be one able to strike a strategic vulnerability:

The susceptibility of vital instruments of national power to being seriously decreased or adversely changed by the application of actions within the capability of another nation to impose. Strategic vulnerability may pertain to political, geographic, economic, informational, scientific, sociological, or military factors.¹²

The operational level of war is the linkage between tactics and strategic ends and is further defined by JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* as:

The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to accomplish the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events. These activities imply a broader dimension of time or space than do tactics; they ensure the logistic and administrative support of tactical forces, and provide the means by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives.¹³

Arguably, the most charged terms used in this document will be martyr and martyrdom.

This is primarily an issue of perspective. The Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary Online defined martyr as “A person who suffers greatly or is killed because of their political or religious beliefs, and is often admired because of it.”¹⁴ These terms are

celebrated terms from the perspective of Islamic ideology and are used to describe those killed while participating in *jihad*. The martyr or witness to *Allah's* will, *shahid* in Arabic, arguably dies in the service of *Allah*, or alternatively for the “cause” in secular attacks not influenced by religion. From the perspective of the person strapping on the explosives or entering the explosives laden vehicle, he or she will become a martyr. However, as used in this thesis the terms martyr and martyrdom do imply sacrifice pursuant to a religious ideology. Since this research examines a religious ideology it must establish a common definition of *Allah* or God. Ron Geaves, *Key Words in Islam* provides an excellent definition and explanation of the term *Allah*: “The One Supreme, Sovereign Creator-God who is also the same God worshipped by the Christians and Jews.”¹⁵ With the exception of direct quotations “God” will be used in this research to represent the Divine Creator common to the three great monotheistic religions. The term *jihad* is also a charged term with significant weight based on perspective. The thesis will examine the extensive details of *jihad*, perspective, and its definition.

Terrorism seems to be a simply defined term but the international community cannot agree on a common definition. Again, it is an issue of perspective. JP 1-02 defines terrorism as “the calculated use of unlawful violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.”¹⁶ JP 1-02 further defines terrorist as “an individual who commits an act or acts of violence or threatens violence in pursuit of political, religious, or ideological objectives.”¹⁷ Wherever possible, the definitions commonly used in US military doctrine will apply and the attached glossary addresses Arabic terms and other words of common usage.

Scope and Limitations

Several delimitations will apply to the scope of the research. The thesis will only address suicide operations that are linked to AQAM and other *Salafi-jihadi* groups or contribute to their goals. The tactic is used worldwide, but not all suicide attacks threaten US interests or stability. This research will not address specific psychological motivations of individual suicide bombers. Rather, this thesis will focus on the individual-group dynamic and factors contributing to effective recruitment. This study is not intended to be a history of terrorism, but will address the relevance of history to determine the origin of modern suicide terror.

The primary sources for research consist of translated and transcribed AQAM and other *Salafi-jihadi* groups written, audio, and video messages, training manuals, and Islamic references. Additionally, transcripts of captured terrorist interrogations will provide perspective within the restrictions of classification. Gaining the perspective of primary sources currently participating in suicide operations poses significant challenges. The strategic plans, (*ends, ways, and means*) of terrorist organizations are generally not readily available through open sources. The analysis will rely on the interpretation of key documents and secondary sources to gain insight to the enemy's perspective.

The research method for this thesis is primarily qualitative, combining document review with elements of case study. First, the historical relevance of suicide operations will be determined from a historical review of suicide operations. The supporting data collection will include some qualitative analysis of statistics but will focus primarily on document review. The document review will include the full range of current publications, from government reports to published analysis in books and articles. The

intent is to develop some primary sources for balance and accuracy of data. Operational art and operational design, as defined in JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* will provide the framework for analysis of the data derived from the case studies, document reviews, and primary sources.

Significance of Research

The attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the USS Cole, the Pentagon, the World Trade Center, and the foiled attack on United Flight 93 were all suicide attacks that precipitated the US “Global War on Terrorism.” Suicide attacks in Iraq and tactics adopted by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s Al Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers are escalating the sectarian violence and threaten to ignite civil war and endanger US regional interests. The evolution of military technology, weapons capable of mass effects, coupled with suicide tactics propose additional implications. Suicide terrorism merits detailed analysis and a strategy to counter the effects.

The significance of this research lies in the accurate and correct characterization of the suicide terrorism threat and the conflict in which it is applied. Understanding the enemy, his center of gravity, critical requirements, critical capabilities, and his vulnerabilities, is fundamental in developing a strategy to defeat him. A common understanding of the operational environment, enemy capabilities, intentions, and likely courses of action (COAs) significantly contributes to success or failure in linking our tactical *means* to our strategic *ends*. The nature of the enemy in the GWOT cannot be fully defined without examining suicide terror as possibly both a *way* and a *means* for enemy operational or strategic objectives. Chapter Two is a comprehensive review of the volumes of literature relating to suicide terrorism. The literature for this research is sorted

into four basic categories based on the origin of the documents. Public interest in suicide terrorism has generated a significant body of work from academic sources and many research institutions are publishing substantial research. Army and joint doctrine establishes the framework for analyzing AQAM within the contemporary operating environment. Doctrinal publications also help develop courses of actions to counter AQAM's martyrdom operations. Finally, captured enemy documents provide perspective in assessing the enemy and learning how this gruesome tactic evolved.

¹Hassan al-Tajiki, "Five Letters to the Africa Corps, dated 5 June 2002," trans. (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, US Military Academy, November 2006), 30, 33.

²MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, Terror by Date Analysis Tools: Suicide Attack / Terror Attacks, 1 January 1980 through 31 December 2006 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.tkIncident b.org/IncidentTacticModule.jsp>; Internet; accessed on 18 January 2007.

³Audry K.Cronin, *Terrorist and Suicide Attacks*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, August 2003), 12.

⁴Dr. Mohammed M. Hafez, "Suicide Terrorism in Iraq: A Preliminary Assessment of the Quantitative Data and Documentary Evidence," in *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (London, UK: Taylor and Francis Group, 2006) 591.

⁵IntelCenter, *al-Qaeda Tactics and Target Brief* (version 1.5) (Alexandria, VA: IntelCenter/Tempest Press, June 2002), 5-6.

⁶The Department of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy for the War on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: GPO, February 2006), 4.

⁷The Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: GPO August 2006), 262.

⁸Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, FBIS Report-FEA20041227000762. Usama bin Ladin transcript, 27 December 2004.

⁹*Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 511.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 526.

¹¹Ibid., 509.

¹²Ibid., 510.

¹³Ibid., 390-391.

¹⁴*Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary Online* (Cambridge University Press 2006) [dictionary on-line] Available from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>; Internet; accessed on 24 September 2006.

¹⁵ To further highlight the sovereignty of God, the Arabic term *Allah* can not be used either grammatically or in syntax in the plural per Ron Geaves, *Key Words in Islam* (New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing, 2006), 10.

¹⁶*Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 536.

¹⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Because I love my son, I encouraged him to die a martyr's death for the sake of Allah. . . . [J]ihad is a religious obligation incumbent upon us, and we must carry it out.¹

Umm Nidal, mother of suicide bomber Muhammad Farhat

The defeat of suicide terror requires a thorough study and analysis of academic or scholarly publications, government research reports, doctrinal publications, and the text produced by enemy doctrine and dogmatic messages. Analysis of these publications establish the nature of the enemy and the origin of suicide tactics; defines the contemporary operating environment and frames the center of gravity analyses of the enemy; and determines the enemy's capabilities and intentions. The key to this research is the synthesis of the critical concepts from the diverse resources and the development of a strategy to counter suicide terror.

The phenomenon of suicide terrorism has produced substantial literature. Many valuable documents precede the attacks of 11 September 2001, but the reemergence of suicide terrorism has produced a considerable body of recent work. The literature for this thesis falls into four distinct but inter-related categories: academic or scholarly publications, government and sponsored think tank studies, doctrinal references, and captured or intercepted enemy documents or transcripts. The academic sector produces most of the current literature on the subject. The leading experts in the field include academic studies in political and social science (Farhad Khosrokhavar, Dr. Robert Pape, Dr. Martin Kramer, Dr. Mia Bloom, and Dr. Mohammed Hafez); psychology, sociology,

and anthropology (Mr. Scott Atran); and terrorism experts (Mr. Yoram Schweitzer, Mr. Daniel Benjamin, and Mr. Steve Simon). Second in number to the academic products are the numerous government studies published by various organizations to include the RAND Corporation, Congressional Research Services, and the US Army Strategic Studies Institute. Doctrinal text, such as Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*; JP 2-1.3, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace*; and Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, frame the analysis for this research. The last body of literature consists of reputable declassified translations of original texts including Sheik Abdullah Azzam's *Join the Caravan*, Usama bin Laden's *Declaration of War* and related *fatwas*, and Al Qaeda handbooks and message transcripts.

Academic Literature

The apparent irrationality of committing suicide in order to kill others produces the first and most common line of analysis. A majority of the academic studies focus on the psychological or sociological factors motivating individual suicide terrorist. This analysis parallels previous studies focused on the individual factors affecting individual participation in terrorism. Most of these studies concentrate on the characteristics of suicide bombers derived from historical data in order to develop an identifiable profile of potential threats. This quantitative line of study combines demographic analysis with psychological characteristics to determine common factors in environment, motivation, and personality. Traditional studies on the psychology of terrorism are based primarily on psychoanalytical or personality pathology theories to include narcissistic personality disorders, paranoid personality dynamic, or other psychological predispositions toward terrorism. Each study produces different conclusions on the motivations and

circumstances leading to suicide terror. However some trends do emerge from academic studies. The traditional profile of suicide terrorists as a young, single, uneducated, male with fanatic religious motivation is wrong. Analysis reveals suicide terrorist range in age from early teens to mid sixties, are both single and married with families, university educated and uneducated, religious and secular, and both male and female. In summary, personality pathology is irrelevant when analyzing terrorist participating in the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency and no viable single profile exists for a suicide terrorist. Additionally, most academic literature recognizes a group relationship as a critical organizational requirement for suicide operations.

The group dynamic identified by a majority of the academic studies will be a key analytical focus of this research. Nearly every study addressing suicide terrorism causally cites a group dynamic as a critical requirement for such attacks. Surrounding each suicide attacker is a series of interrelated groups. The significance and definitions of each group varies with each study. Imagine concentric circles around the potential suicide terrorist. The first ring represents the intimate relationships of immediate family and possible close friends. Their social, political, religious, and economic perceptions significantly influence the potential suicide attacker. The next ring represents the tactical handlers and may consist of the spiritual leader, intelligence team, bomb maker or weapons leader, and the tactical commander. This group translates the terrorist organization's strategic or operational objectives into tactical targets. They recruit, train, equip, and command the suicide terrorist for their missions. This group conducts all the vital military requirements (reconnaissance, targeting, transportation, weaponization, and security) for a suicide attack. Closely related to the tactical operations group are the collaborators. They provide

logistical support, and are a significant source of ideological or sociological encouragement. The last group is the social group with whom the suicide attacker identifies, more specifically his supporters. They set and maintain the supportive atmosphere allowing the terrorist to operate among them. Arguably, this social group and its perceived veneration of the martyr's sacrifice is the critical link for psychological and operational legitimacy of suicide terror.

The collection of academic or scholarly literature also review history and attempt to link historical events to contemporary suicide terror. Some experts cite Husayn ibn Ali's rebellion against the Umayyad Caliph, Yazid and his ultimate massacre in the battle of Karbala in 680 C.E., as the source of the evolution of religiously inspired martyrdom among the *Shi'a* sect of Islam. Others compare the *Ismaili Nazari*, a small *Shi'a* sect, commonly referred to as the Assassins, and their political murders with the modern terrorists. The *Ismaili Nazari* mode of operations supports their characterization as the first Islamic suicide terrorists. The Assassins sought to return to an era of pious Islam and attacked much stronger political and religious opponents through infiltration, killing their targets with daggers and ultimately suffering immediate retribution and execution.² Some academic studies balance the review of ancient religious terrorist with limited references to the Jewish Zealots and Sicarii of the first century A.D. and the Hindu Phansigars, commonly known as the Thugees, of India. Separating fact from fiction complicates the thorough analysis of these historical sects and their activities. Each sect is steeped in religious oral history, legend, or critical observation from opponents. For example, Marco Polo's account of Hassan-I Sabbah's Assassins and their purported use of hashish and other hallucinogenic drugs is more legend than fact.

The historical review of modern terror tactics in the academic literature examine the Japanese kamikaze of World War II, the 1983 suicide bombing of the US Marine barracks, US embassy, and the French compound in Lebanon, Hezbollah's suicide campaign against Israeli Defense Forces in Lebanon, and the Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in the second Intifada. The Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) of Turkey and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of Sri Lanka also receive considerable examination as examples of secular organizations using suicide terror tactics for insurgency and revolution. The Islamic Revolution in Iran or Ayatollah Khomeini's rally of young martyrs in the Iran-Iraq war receives little or no notice in most of the academic studies, despite the direct link with Husayn's martyrdom at Karbala and the radical *Shi'a* suicide campaigns of Hezbollah. A logical link exists between the massacre of Husayn ibn Ali in the first battle of Karbala in 680 C.E. and the modern "cult of martyrdom" within the *Shi'a* sect of Islam. Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini revived and radicalized *Shi'a* traditions after the Islamic Revolution.³ In the Iran--Iraq War, martyrdom became a religious duty for the teenaged human wave members of the *Basiji*. The legendary 13-year-old Hossain Faymadeh of the *Basij* became the prototype martyr when he charged a gap in the Iranian lines and stopped an Iraqi column by detonating himself under the lead tank. Arguably the cult of martyrdom followed the Revolutionary Guards into Lebanon and become the inspiration for the *Shi'a* group Hezbollah's suicide campaign against Israel. The cult of martyrdom within the *Shi'a* sect implies that religious motivation or justification plays a significant role in the execution of certain suicide attacks.

The literature produced by scholars also includes significant statistical or quantitative analysis to support various arguments for the motivations and demographics of suicide terror. Nearly all the books published by academicians addressing suicide terror use the same data sets and share the same graphic representation of the data. The strength of the academic or scholarly studies lies in the consistent representation of general concepts. The shared data sets supporting most of the analysis and trends are relatively clear with some comparative analysis. The academic literature does not regularly link the tactic of suicide terror with operational or strategic objectives. Many make simple causality links between suicide terror and US policy or disenfranchised and oppressed social orders but fail to make the connections between the targets, tactical, operational, and strategic objectives.

Strategic Studies

The literature produced by various government-sponsored studies and think tank organizations fill in the gaps left by the scholarly literature. The RAND Corporation, Congressional Research Services, US Army Strategic Studies Institute, and the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies in Israel all produce relevant studies on suicide terror and Al Qaeda. Israeli think tanks and government agencies lead the world in the study of suicide terrorism. Their contributions to open source studies are substantial. As a result, Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and related groups receive the preponderance of attention in these studies. The alarming rise in suicide attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan has not considerably increased the number of studies on the phenomena. Suicide operations in Iraq are difficult to analyze due to incomplete data, the complex operating environment, and the uniqueness of the suicide attacks. A few notable

exceptions do address the situation in Iraq. Dr. Mohammed Hafez, in conjunction with the United States Institute for Peace, published a substantive assessment of suicide terror in Iraq. Unlike the academic studies, the think tank and agency studies do regularly link the tactical application of suicide terror to strategic objectives.

The think tank studies and government reports provide substantial analysis of Al Qaeda's capabilities and intentions. Additionally, comprehensive reviews of these studies frame the nature of the *Salafi-jihadi* movements and their associations with Al Qaeda. Analysis of the think tank studies aid in defining the operational environment and the effects of the environment for the conflict with AQAM. Several think tank studies also examine the successful application of suicide operations and compare the factors with failed or defeated suicide campaigns. This approach attempts to find critical vulnerabilities of the strategy or the organizational weaknesses of practitioners of suicide terror. These studies provide crucial elements for Al Qaeda's center of gravity analysis and the determination of their critical capabilities, critical requirements, and vulnerabilities.

Doctrinal Publications

Doctrinal publications provide the framework for analyzing suicide operations, defining the conflict, characterizing the enemy, the application of operational art and design, and developing courses of action to defeat suicide terror. Department of Defense, Joint and US Army publications are central to this research. *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* and the *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* provide the context for the current conflict and identify the primary threat. US Army field manuals help define Al Qaeda's *jihad* as a transnational insurgency and provide a

template for analyzing the operational environment. Joint and Army publications also provide a model to synthesize the information from the various sources into the characterization of the enemy and analyze their capabilities with regard to suicide tactics. Doctrinal counterinsurgency references also help frame the development of a counter suicide strategy. Doctrinal references provide the models for analysis and the frameworks to develop solutions for this research.

Enemy Documents

Analysis of the enemy's documents significantly helps define the nature of the enemy. Transcripts of Al Qaeda audio and video messages, translations of Al Qaeda correspondences, religious edicts (*fatwas*), and tactical handbooks provide valuable insight into the enemy's strategic objectives, operational reach, and tactical goals. Al Qaeda's information operations are a critical requirement for their insurgency and provide volumes of information. The recently declassified HARMONY Documents (captured Al Qaeda documents) not only provide quality textual references for the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency but also chronicle the adaptation of the organization to the changing operational environment. These documents record the establishment of links of various terror organizations with Al Qaeda and the adaptation of suicide tactics; for example, Al Qaeda's recognition of Abu Musab al Zarqawi's *jihadist* group and his suicide terror campaign, as a franchise of Al Qaeda. Other captured or intercepted documents highlight Al Qaeda's emphasis on martyrdom operations and the promulgation of supporting their radical ideology.

The subject of suicide terror has produced a large body of research literature. Academic and scholarly publications successfully identify key historical events,

differentiate factors relating to suicide terror, and conceptualizing trends in complex environments. Government reports and think tank studies link suicide tactics with operational or strategic objectives. Additionally, the think tank studies support the academic historical accounts and accurately differentiate between organizational motivations. Doctrinal publications, specifically operations, joint operations, intelligence, and counterinsurgency documents, provide the framework for analysis and countermeasure development. Enemy documents are primary sources providing valuable insight to their perspective. Chapter Three defines the complex methodology for the conduct of this research. The primary methodology is the system of systems approach in analyzing complex interrelations. Historical Islamic ideologues and extremist leaders will be examined through the lens of the elements of operational design. Additionally, elements of operational design, end state and objectives, effects, centers of gravity, lines of operations, and operational reach to define the nature AQAM and the contemporary operating environment to assess their intent and capabilities.

¹Robert Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam and the Crusades* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2005), 102.

²Christoph Reuter, *My Life is a Weapon: A Modern History of Suicide Bombing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 26.

³*Ibid.*, 42-43.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Resistance, death, and martyrdom, are more merciful than living in such a house where its walls bare witness to such a misery, shame, and young people's suffering. . . .this is an example of the status of the condition of our today's [*sic*] nation. . .¹

Abu Mus'ab al Suri, *The Call for Global Resistance*

The research method used for this study will be primarily qualitative, combining document review with elements of case study. Elements of operational design and a systems perspective of the operational environment, as defined in JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* provides the framework for analysis of the suicide terror threat derived from the case studies and document reviews. The strategic analysis of AQAM and the *Salafi-Jihadi* insurgency identifies the relationships between the *ends*, *ways* and *means* of suicide terrorism. A systems approach, using the interrelated functional elements of endstate and objectives, effects, centers of gravity, lines of operations, and operational reach, will frame the study of organizations using suicide terror.² The supporting data collection includes the review of existing quantitative analysis of statistics to validate the growing trend of suicide terrorism and analyzes the group dynamics associated with suicide terrorists. The document review includes the full range of current publications, from government reports to published books and articles. Applying key elements of operational design, endstate and objectives, effects, centers of gravity, lines of operations, and operational reach defines the nature Al Qaeda and associated movement's threat and develops countermeasures. The historical data points chosen for this study examine the evolution of extreme Islamic ideologies and the role these ideologies play in the

implementation of suicide terror as a strategic or operational *means*. This systematic analysis of Al Qaeda's suicide campaigns examines the incarnation of the principles of martyrdom and its resonance of a unifying ideology.

The application of key elements of operational design defines the nature of the enemy. This study examines AQAM and the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency through the operational elements of their endstate and objectives, effects, centers of gravity, lines of operations, and operational reach to conceptualize their campaign plan.³ A systems perspective of AQAM's operational environment helps with the Center of Gravity analysis and determines their capabilities, requirements and vulnerabilities. AQAM consist of numerous complex networks unified through a *Salafist-jihadi* ideology. The systems approach helps conceptualize the strategic and operational interactions within the networks. The United States Army Command and General Staff College's Department of Joint and Multinational Operations (DJMO) provides a model for the analysis of an ideology. This model frames the three components of an ideology: "The Ideal", "The Current State", and the "Method to Achieve the Ideal," and is the basis of analysis for the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology. Figure 2 depicts the components of an ideology and their relationship with strategic *ends*, *ways*, and *means*.

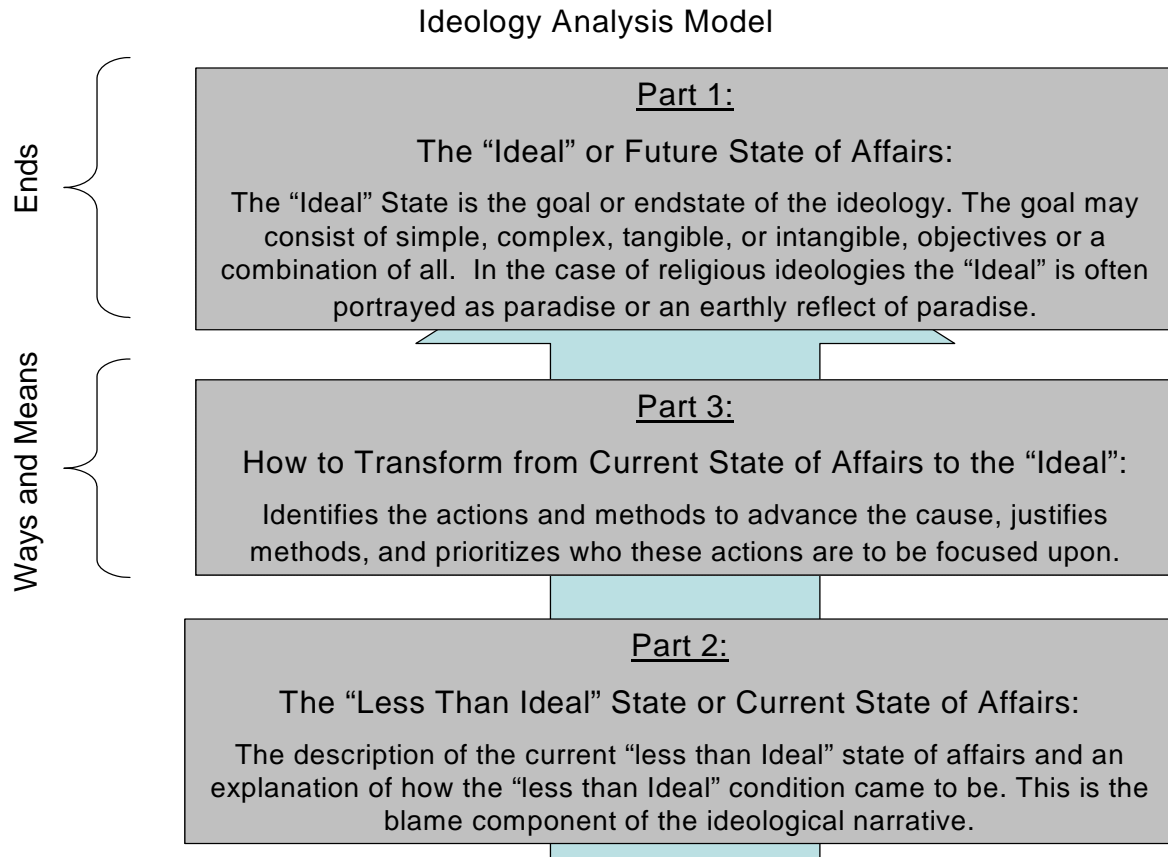


Figure 2. The Ideology Analysis Model

Source: Mr. John Cary, Department of Joint and Multinational Operations, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

The methodology for this study combines the complex analysis of the system perspective of the operational environment outlined in JP 3.0 *Joint Operations* with key elements of operational design to answer the secondary and tertiary research questions. Elements of operational design define the operational reach, lines of operation, center of gravity, capabilities and intent of Al Qaeda and associated movements. Ultimately, the analysis identifies friendly lines of operation to defeat suicide terror. Chapter Four contains the linkages between AQAM’s strategic and operational objectives within the context of suicide terrorism identify AQAM’s center of gravity, critical capabilities,

critical requirements, and critical vulnerabilities. It examines the origins and components of the “charismatic leaders” and the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology and the defining characteristics of strategic and operational martyrdom operations and their perpetrators.

¹Abu Musab Al-Suri, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, trans. Counter Terrorism Center (Arlington, VA: CENTRA Technology, Inc., 2006), 176.

²The Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington: GPO September 2006), II-22.

³*Joint Operations*, IV-6.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS: AL QAEDA'S IDEOLOGY OF MARTYRDOM

A martyrdom operation executed by men from the Peninsula [The Land of Two Holy Sites] has a great stimulating psychological effects [*sic*] on hundreds of mujahidin from inside to practice this experiment and acquire martyrdom. In fact, one of them opened the door for this effort. How nice it would be if in the future the executor of an operation is videotaped while he is giving an inciting speech to the nation and then his speech is published after the operation is carried out successfully similar to what HAMAS is doing.¹

Abu Huthayfa, letter to Ayman al-Zawahiri

Strategic Estimate of Al Qaeda

AQAM's strategic aims appear to be relatively transparent and fully integrated with their ideological principles. However, significant analysis is required to disaggregate the complex nesting of martyrdom operations and Al Qaeda's strategic vision. Al Qaeda's strategic vision of a transnational Islamic empire, euphemistically referred to as a Caliphate, is easily surmised from the messages disseminated by key Al Qaeda leadership targeting aggrieved Muslims worldwide. Al Qaeda's agenda is based in religious terms but appeals to the Muslim masses as social justice through *jihad*. Key leaders of the group have adopted, merged, and propagated extremist Islamic principles combining them into a resonant *Salafi-jihadist* ideology. Modern *Salafi-jihadists* do not hide the overarching strategic *ends* of their movement. The *ways* and *means* to achieve their *ends* is a significant source of conflict and define the nature of Fundamentalist, Islamist, Extremist, and Jihadist.² The common *end* for these groups is the creation of a unified Muslim community or *Ummah*, following the legal system outlined by the revelations of God, the *shari'a* law. The rightful ruler recognized by the entire *Ummah* is

the Caliph, or successor to the prophet, and implements *shari'a* law, hence the Caliphate is a rightful Islamic state. From this Caliphate, Muslims are duty bound to spread the true faith (Islam), and faithful execution of this duty grants them the right to rule the world. *Salafi-jihadists* contend the Caliphate must be established in traditional Muslim lands, best defined as territory once ruled or occupied by Muslims.³ A defensive *jihad* is the recapture of any land once occupied or ruled by Muslims and an offensive *jihad* is the spread of Islam beyond the traditional Muslim lands. Figure 3 graphically represents the initial territorial objective of the *Salafi-jihadi* Caliphate.



Figure 3. Territorial objective of the Salafi-jihadist Caliphate
Source: Dr. Jacquelyn K. Davis, *Radical Islamist Ideologies and the Long War* (Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Inc. January 2007).

Traditional *jihadi* ideologues express the struggle to reestablish the Caliphate as an epic and cosmic battle between good and evil. Al Qaeda founders defined their organization's role as the leading element or vanguard setting the conditions for the radical transformation of Islam within the context of this cosmic struggle. The concept of Al Qaeda setting the stage for transformation of the Islamic world and enduring great sacrifice was established by the founding ideologue Abdullah Azzam:

Every principle needs a vanguard to carry it forward and while focusing its way into society, puts up with heavy tasks and enormous sacrifices. There is no ideology, neither earthly nor heavenly, that does not require such a vanguard that gives everything it possesses in order to achieve victory for this ideology. It carries the flag all along the sheer, endless and difficult path until it reaches its destination in the reality of life, since Allah has destined that it should make it and manifest [*sic*] itself.⁴

As the vanguard, Al Qaeda must accomplish several strategic key tasks or *ways* to set the conditions to establish the Caliphate. These *ways* define three distinct lines of operation for AQAM: neutralize the Far Enemy, defeat the Near Enemy, and mobilize the Muslim masses. Al Qaeda must facilitate the overthrow of existing infidel or apostate governments currently in the Islamic world (the Near Enemy), establish or unite a transnational base of support in an *Ummah*, and foment a popular Muslim uprising in some or all of these countries. Instrumental to these *ways* is neutralizing the enormous stabilizing support provided by Western powers, specifically the US (the Far Enemy), to the infidel and apostate governments. To neutralize the Far Enemy, stimulate a popular uprising, and facilitate the ultimate collapse of the targeted apostate and infidel regimes, Al Qaeda portrays the governments of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, and others as collaborating puppets of the Crusaders and Jews. Their information operations infrastructure further portrays the US and other Western powers as oppressing Muslims

through these corrupt and immoral governments. Figure 4 depicts the interrelation between Al Qaeda's strategic *ends*, *ways*, and *means*, with the lines of operation and the integration of strategic and operational martyrdom operations.

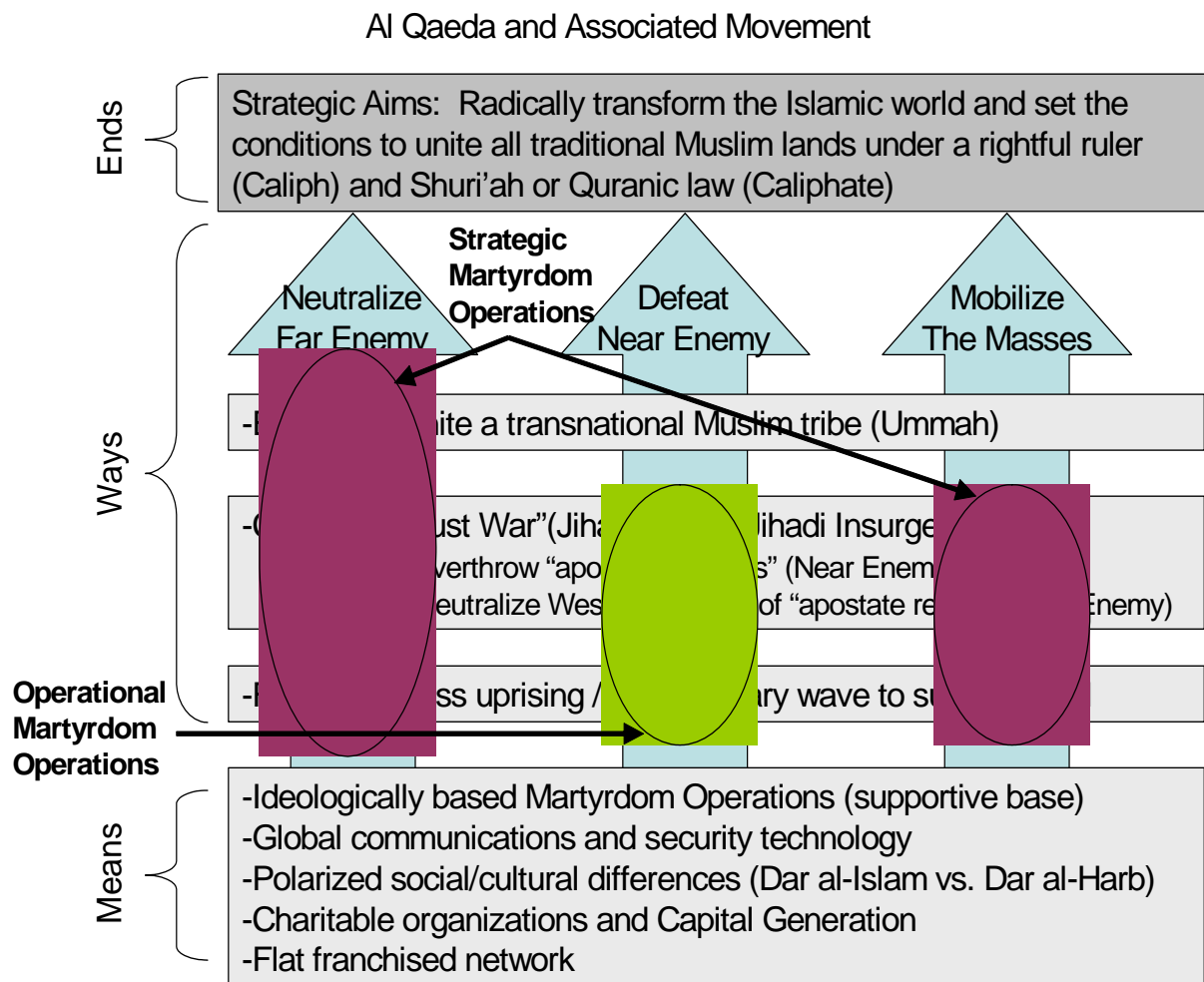


Figure 4. Relationship between AQAM's Strategic Ways, Ends, Means, Lines of Operations, and Martyrdom Operations

Al Qaeda's lines of operation, *ends*, *ways*, and *means* also support their seven phase plan to achieve their strategic endstate. The phases of the *jihad* are described by

Ayman al-Zawahiri as: (1) “The Awakening,” which is the spectacular global introduction of Al Qaeda as the vanguard of the global insurgency through the attacks on US targets 11 September 2001; (2) “Opening the Eyes,” or the mobilization of the Islamic community into a mass movement (2003-2006); (3) “Arise and Stand-up” where the focus is on facilitating the collapse of infidel and apostate Muslim regimes and establish an enclave lead by the *Amirate* (2007-2010); (4) “*Amirate*” is to topple remaining moderate Muslim regimes (2010-2013); (5) “New World Order” is the consolidation and establishment of the Islamic Caliphate as a world power (2013-2016); (6) “Confrontation with the West” is the conduct of total war with the West and Israel (2016-2020); and (7) Is the “Decisive Victory” for Islam (2020).⁵

Al Qaeda seeks to undermine Middle East regional stability by demonstrating the US is both politically and militarily weak through the implementation of a transnational insurgency and guerilla war (*jihad*) using martyrdom operations to extend their operational reach and influence. *Salafi-jihadists* commonly refer to the “expulsion” of American forces from Lebanon after a suicide car-bomb attack on the US Marine barracks and the US embassy, as well as the withdrawal of American forces from Somalia after the battle of Mogadishu as a testament to the vulnerabilities of the Far Enemy. Martyrdom operations against the Near Enemy or infidel or apostate regimes also support the strategic vision of a transnational Caliphate. Al Qaeda’s deputy Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri describes the strategic and operational implication of the collapse of Iraq, support of the *Ummah*, and the establishment of a military and political foothold in the region in an intercepted letter to Abu Masab Zarqawi:

If our intended goal in this age is the establishment of a caliphate in the manner of the Prophet and if we expect to establish its state predominantly-according to how it appears to us-in the heart of the Islamic world, then your efforts and sacrifices-God permitting-are a large step directly towards that goal...

The first stage: Expel the Americans from Iraq.

The second stage: Establish an Islamic authority or amirate, then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of a caliphate- over as much territory as you can to spread its power in Iraq, i.e., in Sunni areas, is in order to fill the void stemming from the departure of the Americans, immediately upon their exit and before un-Islamic forces attempt to fill this void, whether those whom the Americans will leave behind them, or those among the un-Islamic forces who will try to jump at taking power.⁶

Al Qaeda's leadership fully integrates the theological principles of selfless sacrifice and martyrdom into the invigorated *Salafi-jihadist* ideology. They specifically advance the concept that sacrifice is necessary to achieve the true Islamic state. The influential *jihadi* strategist Abu Musab al-Suri (aka Mustafa Setmariam Nasar) in his *Salafi-jihadi* manifesto: *The Global Islamic Resistance Call* published in 2005, provides insight to the strategic importance of martyrdom operations to the movement:

I believe that God's will is for the Ummah's victory and for its freedom from suffering, for it to raise its flag of religion high, and for God's Shari'ah to rule as a result of the sacrifices of those who rose to the highest glory. They rose to the level of martyrdom and those were resistance fighters here and there as well as those who offer themselves as sacrifice to this religion, may God bless them. These people win a quick personal victory, and pave the way for the Ummah's victory. . . . I'm not saying that it will take the blood of thousands or hundreds of thousands, but the blood of millions of martyrs of this nation until we earn good tidings and victory, and we earn what God promised.⁷

According to the Central Intelligence Agency's Counter Terrorism Center and The Jamestown Foundation, al-Suri's strategic treatise is one of the most thorough and prolific expression of *Salafi-jihadi*, more specifically, Al Qaeda's doctrine and strategy.⁸ Strategic martyrdom operations focus on neutralizing the Far Enemy by first tipping the cost-benefit calculus in favor of withdrawing support from the infidel and apostate

governments of the Middle East. Sensational strikes against US interests are designed to expose the Far Enemy as fundamentally weak and bolster the righteousness and commitment of the *Salafi-jihadist* cause. This is the basis for AQAM's motto: "We love death more than our opponents love life," attributed to bin Laden. Strategic martyrdom strikes are also intended to coalesce and unite the *Ummah* by demonstrating the depth and strength of true Islam in contrast to the weak and immoral Western enemies. Ultimately such martyrdom operations serve to legitimize the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology as the embodiment of global *jihad*.

Martyrdom operations also serve an operational function to defeat the *mujahdin's* Near Enemy. Operational martyrdom strikes undermine stability and security within weak targeted states, specifically Iraq, Afghanistan, and more recently, Algeria to facilitate system collapse. Within the context of insurgency, the perpetrators of these strikes intimidate or terrorize some sectors of the local population, appear legitimate to other sectors, demonstrate the inability of the targeted regime to provide security and protection, and provide the targeted audience with the alternative of protection under the rule of *shari'a* law. Al Qaeda in Iraq specifically, "Qaedat al-Jihad fi Bilad ar-Rafidain" (Al Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers), effectively exploits global communications to reinforce the dramatic impact of martyrdom attacks in Iraq.⁹ Abu Musab al-Zarqawi emphasizes the importance martyrdom operations in rallying the faithful and ultimately defeating the US and facilitating the collapse of the state in his 6 April 2004 audio message:

As for you, hero mujahidin, I send you greetings of glory and pride. God has honored you and by your hands, the greatest power throughout history has been forced to submission. Be resolute, kneel down before God, sharpen your

swords, and burn the land under the feet of the invaders. Let them taste the bitter defeat and throw them into hell. The mills of the fierce war have started and the battle is hot. Be the knights of this battle and rush toward its flames. Move against the Americans, against Al-Rafidah, against the hypocrites and collaborators.

O Islamic nation: We are your sons and faithful soldiers. We promise you that we will continue this way until the last drop of our blood. For your sake, we will always be as pure as potable water, as a gentle breeze, and as light that shines on your path.¹⁰

This operational component of the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency frames a prolonged and violent conflict designed to work against the US in both the international and domestic arenas and produce the collapse of the Near Enemy states.

The National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism identifies AQAM's center of gravity as their extremist ideology. However, further analysis is required to correctly assess the threat's centers of gravity in order to defeat them. Dr. Joseph L. Strange of the Marine Corps War College clarifies Clausewitz's concept of center of gravity by further defining it as the "dynamic and powerful physical and moral agents of action or influence with certain qualities and capabilities that derive their benefit from a given location or terrain."¹¹ Within this vein this research identifies Al Qaeda and Associated Movement's center of gravity as the legitimacy and resonance of their ideology as the binding source of strength and power among the elements of the *Salafi-jihadist* insurgency. The moral agent is the reform of Islam in the framework of their *salafi* ideology with a large disenfranchised global target audience in the terrain of modern global communications. Al Qaeda's ideological center of gravity empowers several critical capabilities which generate force and persuasion within the insurgency, the most important of which is the operational reach of martyrdom operations. Both strategic and operational martyrdom operations further reinforce the other three critical

capabilities: the capability to recruit and regenerate resources and manpower; the conduct effective decentralized operations; and the integration of other organizations through the “market share” of legitimate *jihad* and martyrdom operations. Several critical requirements are essential for the employment of Al Qaeda’s martyrdom operations. The principal critical requirement is a supportive social or cultural structure which tacitly or explicitly subscribes to the legitimacy of martyrdom. With the advent of global communications the location of that social support construct does not have to be co-located with the *mujahdin* or the operation to be a critical requirement. In fact, the perceived or actual distance between the prospective martyr and supportive social group is a defining difference between the strategic and operational martyr. The other critical requirements essential to AQAM’s critical capabilities are freedom of movement, financial support, resonant information warfare and strategic communications, operational security, and the legitimacy of a just war or *jihad*. Additional critical requirements are vulnerable to attack or exploitation and define weakness in Al Qaeda and Associated Movement’s center of gravity.

Figure 5 graphically depicts the relationship between AQAM's center of gravity (COG), 4 critical capabilities (CC), 7 related critical requirements (CR), and associated critical vulnerabilities (CV). Three decisive points (DP) are also identified to focus effects and attack critical vulnerabilities:

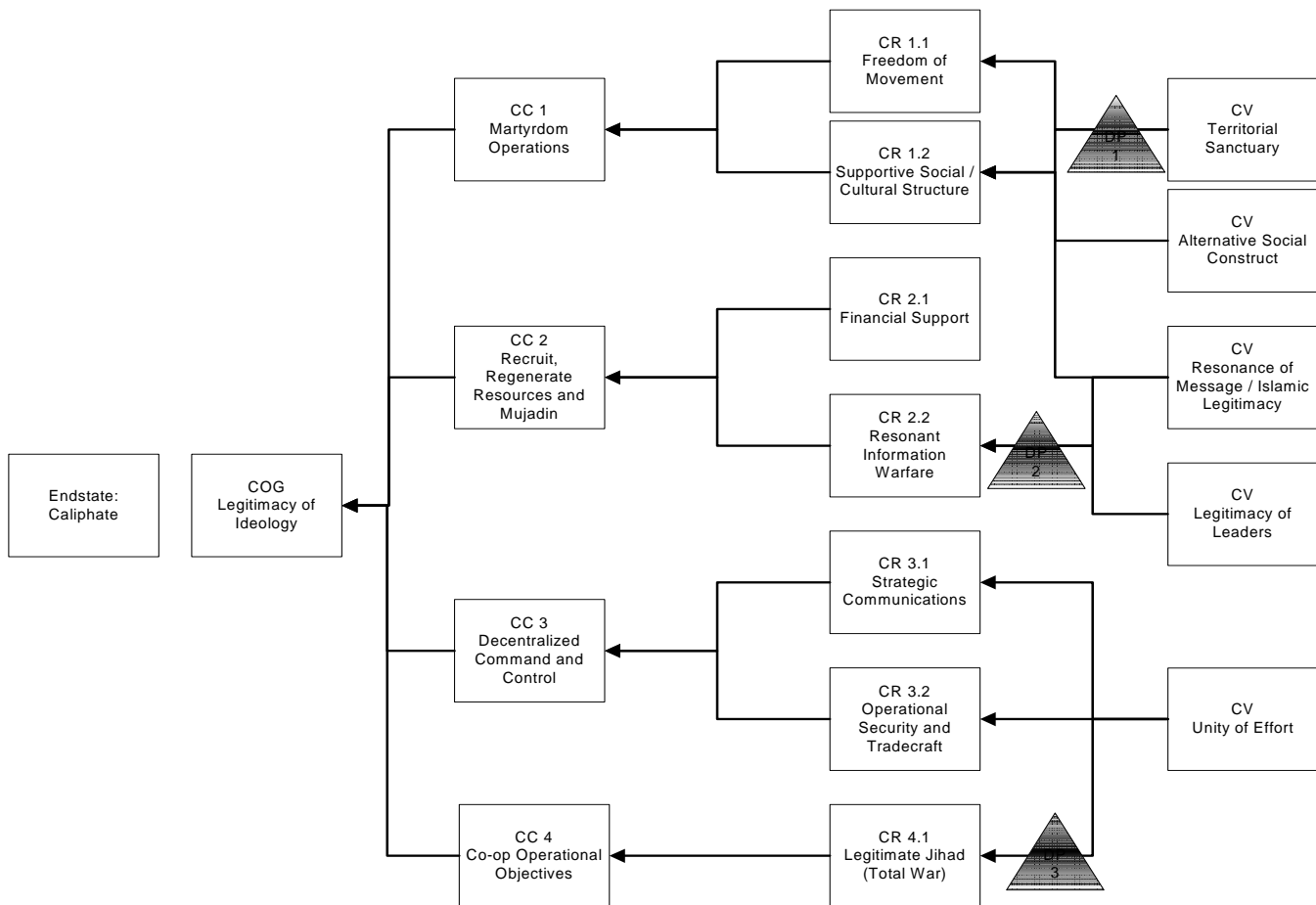


Figure 5. Center of Gravity Analysis for Al Qaeda and Associated Movements

The first critical vulnerability is unity of effort among the diverse elements of the *Salafi-jihadist* insurgency which could undermine the legitimacy of the *jihad* and the supportive social or cultural structure. Directly linked to unity of effort is the legitimacy of the

movement's leaders and the resonance and legitimacy of their militant messages. The target populations can further be exposed to viable social constructs as alternatives to the transnational Caliphate and *salafi* inspired *shari'a* law. The significance of the "charismatic leader" in the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency, the roles key personalities played in the formation, and the effective propagation of the unifying ideology warrant further study.

The Nexus and The Base

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the catalytic event leading to the formulation of Al Qaeda (translated as The Basis, or Base). The reaction throughout the Islamic world to the Soviet invasion ranged from Muslim nations providing material and manpower to counter the incursion of the communist Soviet Army into traditional Muslim lands (often compared to the Mongol invasion of Arab lands, 1220-1500 A.D.), to other Muslim nations sending the disaffected elements of their own society to take up arms against the non-believing Soviets, to other Islamic powers seizing the opportunity to counter Iran's (*Shi'a*) Islamic Revolution. Addul Rasul Sayaf, an Islamic scholar of the Hanbali School of jurisprudence and military leader of the Afghan resistance, made the first broad appeal to the Arab world for *jihadists* to come and fight in Afghanistan. Among those first to respond to Sayaf's appeal was an exiled Palestinian, a founding member of Hamas, and professor of Islamic Law at the Addul--Aziz University in Egypt, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam. Azzam, considered the "Godfather of *jihad*," was a veteran of the Six Day War with Israel and fled to Jordan after Israel occupied his West Bank hometown. He became the driving influence in the development and propagation of the modern ideology of *jihad*.¹² His radical call for action resonated with disaffected co-

religionists frustrated with the plight of the Palestinians and now facing another incursion upon Muslim lands at the hands of the Soviets. Azzam was a unifying force in framing the conflict in Afghanistan not as a tribal fight for self determination but a *jihad*:

“Muslim lands were threatened, and every Muslim man must join the fight, an obligation that had priority over everything else, including family and job.”¹³ Azzam characterized the war in Afghanistan as a defensive *jihad* to recapture old Muslim lands and as the first step of a global effort to reclaim all occupied Muslim lands.

Usama bin Laden left his job at the Saudi Binladin Group and answered the call to action in Afghanistan bringing considerable capital, supplies, and even heavy construction equipment. He worked out of Peshawar, Pakistan, funneling resources to the front and coordinated the construction of bunkers and fortifications for the *mujahdin*. In 1984 bin Laden partnered with Azzam and established the *Mekhtab al Khidemat* (MAK) or Service Bureau to facilitate the influx of Arab fighters and organize them for introduction into Afghanistan. They also established the *Bait al-Ansar* or House of Supporters in Peshawar to stage, house, and feed incoming fighters before infiltrating them into Afghanistan. “Sheikh” Azzam organized and led the *Mekhtab al Khidemat* and bin Laden funded it.¹⁴ Bin Laden traveled to Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations to solicit funds and recruit fighters. He had unprecedented access to key nodes in the Saudi government and social clans. Bin Laden worked directly with Saudi Chief of Intelligence, Prince Turki al-Faisal, as a recruiter for the *jihad* in Afghanistan. Additionally, he infiltrated the traditional Islamic charity (one of the Five Pillars of Islam) programs of the wealthy Saudi clans. He worked like a charity broker, funneling funds to Peshawar through various front charities and programs.¹⁵

Simultaneously, the al-Jihad movement in Egypt pursued the overthrow of the secular regimes of Anwar Sadat and later Hosni Mubarak. The Egyptian government did not collapse after al-Jihad's assassination of President Sadat and the government's response was swift and brutal. The Islamists polarized into two groups, the Islamic Jihad Group, and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad led by the physician Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. Zawahiri was captured, tried, and sentenced to three years in prison and finally exiled to Saudi Arabia in the Egyptian government's response to President Sadat's assassination. He answered Azzam's call for *jihad* and left Saudi Arabia for Peshawar to lend his medical skill to the treatment of wounded Arab Afghans, as the foreign fighters were known. Zawahiri, as the leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, brought with him his own brand of Islamist rhetoric and radical ideology to include Sayyid Qutb's principle of attacking apostate Muslim leaders.

The war in Afghanistan attracted young Muslims from all over the world and the collaboration of these key leaders produced Al Qaeda's global vision. Al Qaeda's original organizational structure was based on the dynamics among Azzam, bin Laden, and Zawahiri, and the traditional tribal model of a leader working alongside an advisory council (*Shura*). The decisions of the leader, supported by his interpretation of the Quran, the path (*Sunna*) outlined by the other Islamic traditions (*Hadith*), and consultation with religious scholars set the strategic direction of the organization. Upon declaring victory in Afghanistan with the Soviet withdrawal, schisms began to appear in the organization's vision. Abdullah Azzam maintained his disdain for the Palestinian struggle against Israel because Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had become an Arab secular nationalist movement with no regard for Islam. He preferred to bring Al Qaeda's

newfound power to bear on the defensive *jihad* against Israel and not against other Muslim nations or rulers. “He rejected the evolution of al Qaeda into a global terrorist organization, and he condemned the use of terror tactics directed against non-combatants, other Muslims, and innocent women and children.”¹⁶ Usama bin Laden favored a more aggressive defensive *jihad* propagated by Egyptian Islamic Jihad’s Zawahiri, who advocated operations against secular Muslim regimes and their western allies, specifically the US. Abdullah Azzam and two of his sons were killed by a car bomb in November 1989.¹⁷ Other key members sharing Azzam’s view of Israel as the “near enemy” soon meet untimely deaths, giving rise to speculation of a purge within the organization. Usama bin Laden became the leader of Al Qaeda and hereafter everyone seeking to join pledged allegiance to him. He consistently directed the organization in conjunction with a deputy responsible for consultation, policy development, and decision making. Al-Zawahiri became bin Laden’s deputy after his military commander, Muhammad Atef, was killed by American operations in Afghanistan in 2001.

After the Soviet withdrawal Usama bin Laden established training camps in Sudan and Afghanistan and built a formidable military force by combining the “Afghan Alumni” as cadre with new volunteers from various countries with disaffected Muslims, to include Chechnya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Indonesia. Most of the “Afghan Alumni” returned to their home countries and continued to participate in various extremist activities to include building relationships and networks. The few who could not return to their homes because of previous terrorist activities remained and formed the nucleus of Al Qaeda. Usama bin Laden moved to the sanctuary of Sudan and continued to develop the financial ties and expand the training base of Al Qaeda. This nucleus and

cadre began developing a complex network with the leadership serving as the ideological center and providing financial and material support for terrorist groups aspiring to spread *jihad* to other regions. Al Qaeda, as a non-state actor, became the primary sponsor and supporter of terrorist and guerrilla operations world-wide. It played key roles in the 29 December, 1992 bombing of a Hotel housing US Marines in Aden, Yemen, the bombing attack on the World Trade Center in January 1993, attacks on American forces in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1993, the Bojinka airline plot in 1994-1995, and the 1995 attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.¹⁸ In the wake of the assassination attempt on President Mubarak, Sudan refused to turn over several people connected to the attack. Resultantly, Sudan received significant international pressure led by Egypt and the US to cease harboring and supporting terrorists within its borders. This international pressure contributed to the expulsion of Usama bin Laden and his redeployment and consolidation in Afghanistan. As a guest of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, bin Laden established a sanctuary, a base of operations allowing the organization to mature militarily and organizationally out of the reach of most of his enemies. He was building the vanguard for an Islamic insurgency or global *jihad*.

Al Qaeda commenced direct terrorist operations 07 August 1998 with near simultaneous suicide attacks on the US embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya. The attacks on the US embassies established Al Qaeda as a credible and sophisticated actor with global reach. Suicide terrorism to date was primarily a tactic used at the local level, with very few exceptions (Hezbollah in Argentina, and LTTE in India), targeting an occupying force or to overthrow a government from within. Al Qaeda

transformed suicide terrorism from a local phenomenon to an asymmetric tactic for strategic purposes. Al Qaeda promoted the idea of *istishhad*, or self sacrifice in the service of God, as the most powerful weapon of global *jihad* and had profound influence on the employment of this tactic by other like minded organizations. Bin Laden attempted to consolidate power and unify factions for the Islamic insurgency and announced in a 23 February 1998 *fatwa*, the establishment of the International Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders, saying it was the duty of all Muslims to kill Americans, both civilian and military, and their allies everywhere. He sought to establish a “coalition of the willing” among disparate Islamist groups sharing Al Qaeda’s vision. Al Zawahiri’s Egyptian Islamic Jihad continued to collaborate with Al Qaeda through intelligence, recruiting, and operations but more importantly developing Al Qaeda’s ideological vision. Al Qaeda and Egyptian Islamic Jihad merged in June 2001 and operate under the alias of Talaa'al al-Fateh (Vanguards of Conquest) and Qaedat al Jihad (Base of Jihad).¹⁹

The Ideology of Martyrdom

Proponents of Al Qaeda’s ideology combine a relative historical perspective with Islamic principles for their guidance and motivation. The *Salafi-jihadists* elicit radical religious tenets of Islam as both the inspirational motivation for their followers and the framework for their political, strategic, and operational objectives. In doing so they justify and even endorse the killing of non-combatants, to include women and children, the violent overthrow of governments and the slaughter of their rulers, foment hatred, and martyrdom operations. Al Qaeda is unique from previous Islamic movements by its uncompromising assertion that a true Islamic state can not be established through

cooperation or peaceful means but only through revolutionary warfare, more specifically a “just war” (*jihad*) to overthrow apostate tyrants or “the Near Enemy.” Al Qaeda’s ideology is integrally linked to their strategic and operational political objectives providing the framework of the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency. The ideology of martyrdom promotes Al Qaeda’s political agenda and effectively resonates throughout disparate Islamist groups due to the influence of charismatic leaders and inspirational Islamist scholars: Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Halim ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), and Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). Al Qaeda’s ideology is based on three integral and resonate tenets, *tawhid* or the concept of absolute unity with God, combined with *da’wah*, or the promotion of Islam, and *jihad* as just warfare and all serve to inspire martyrdom operations.

Tawhid is defined as the belief in oneness and uniqueness of God. This principle is central to all Islamic doctrine and contributes to the uncompromising view of Islam as the true monotheistic religion.²⁰ This principle combines the political, economic, public and private components of human life under the domain of religion, specifically Islam. The primacy of this founding doctrine is the first of the “five pillars of Islam,” the *shahada*, or testament, also known as the Muslim profession of faith: “There is no God but God, and Mohammad is His prophet.”²¹ Ibn Taymiyya, inspirational scholar of the Qur’an and *Sunna* (Prophetic traditions) and considered by many the “father of *jihad*” illustrated the primacy of *tawhid* by arguing that God’s law, as revealed in the Qur’an, is above all others; therefore the Qur’an is the basis for governance of a true Islamic state. Abdullah Azzam reiterated this point 600 years later as he declared that an Islamic state is defined by the rule of *shari’a* law, and not by the religion of the population. Ibn

Taymiyya's writings focused on the nature of state power derived from the rule of *shari'a* law and the responsibilities of the rulers and *Ummah*. "Living at a time when shamanist Mongols had conquered the core of the Islamic world, he issued religious rulings which decreed that Muslims could not live in a nation ruled by infidels."²² Ibn Taymiyya further argued, regardless of the Mongol ruler's recitation of the *shahada* and claims to be Muslim, they did not rule by *shari'a* law, but maintained their tribal laws; therefore the Mongols elevated their man-made laws above the laws of God and were infidels and apostate rulers. Ibn Taymiyya rendered the Mongols as infidels (*takfir*) and not subject to protection as Muslims, but were to be fought and killed.

The removal of apostate rulers in Muslim lands and the establishment of *shari'a* law is justified by the primacy of God's laws derived from *tawhid* and considered a struggle for the sake of God, or more specifically *jihad*. The Mongols, or any other rulers, were not going to relinquish power at the request of their subjugated religious scholars, so they must be deposed and destroyed through warfare. Ibn Taymiyya correlated the requirements to violently overthrow apostate rulers and the struggle to establish the rule of God's law with both the inner struggle to follow the way of God (greater *jihad*) and the external struggle to promote the truth of Islam and oppose evil (lesser *jihad*) as a religious obligation for all Muslims. Al Qaeda expresses the violent continuum of *jihad* in their training manual: "Islamic governments have never and will never be established through peaceful solutions and cooperative councils. They are established as they [always] have been, by pen and gun, by word and bullet, by tongue and teeth."²³ Usama bin Laden's ideological mentor, Abdullah Azzam, often quoted or referenced Ibn Taymiyya in his own *jihadi* works. In his treatise, *Miraculous signs of Allah the*

Compassionate regarding the Afghans' jihad, published in 1984, Azzam described the intimate relationship of the rule of *shari'a* as a product of *tawhid* and the duty of *jihad*. He defined the goal or end-state of *jihad* as the establishment of an Islamic state governed by *shari'a* law. To recruit *mujahdin* and depict the Afghan *jihad* as a just war, Azzam often drew common analogies comparing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to the medieval Mongol conquest of Islamic lands. This analogy, based on Ibn Taymiyya's interpretation of *tawhid* and *jihad*, supports modern *jihadi's* assertion that the current leaders of every Islamic country are apostates and must be fought and killed.

Sayyid Qutb provided modern interpretations and expanded the relevance to the tenet of *tawhid* in his treatise *Milestones* published in 1964. He argued the world is morally bankrupt and Islam was the true path to revive greatness. The bankruptcy Qutb cites resides in mankind's wholesale rejection of the oneness of God or *tawhid*. The corrupt secular governments of Nasser's Egypt and other Muslim countries promote this ignorance of *tawhid*, according to Qutb. He described this state of ignorance as *jahiliyya* or the time of ignorance and chaos before the Truth of Islam was revealed to Mohammad. He further asserts that the solution to the Muslim problems lay in the restoration of Islam as a comprehensive way of life reminiscent of the first generations of Muslims under Mohammad's leadership.²⁴ This is the foundational theme of *Salafi* thought. According to Qutb these early generations of Muslims, which include the *Salaf*, sought "the Qur'an to learn the orders of God, like soldiers in the field, not for curiosity or science."²⁵ He further argued that Muslims ruled by apostate governments who do not embrace *tawhid* and do not seek the rule of *shari'a* law through *jihad* chose to live in *jahiliyya* and were not subject to protection as fellow Muslims but were to be fought and killed. Resultantly,

Qutb defined *jihad* as a justified armed and intellectual struggle against all who reject the oneness of God or *tawhid* erasing the traditional doctrine of protecting fellow Muslims. He advocated violent *jihad* against apostate leaders in Islamic countries as well as against Muslims who perpetuate *jahiliyya*. It should be noted that Sayyid Qutb is considered a martyr by most Islamists for both his works and ultimate execution in 1966 with other members of the Muslim Brotherhood for attempting the overthrow of the Egyptian government.

Da'wah literally means to call or summon but is commonly defined as “the promotion of Islam to both Muslims and non-Muslims...considered to be a central duty for all Muslims. *Da'wa* [sic] may be achieved either by preaching or by exemplary good actions.”²⁶ *Da'wah* is often compared to Christian evangelism, and its most common application is to bring Muslims who have lapsed in their practice of Islam back into the fold. The focus of all *da'wah* efforts is the promotion of *tawhid* or the oneness and ultimate sovereignty of God. *Jihadists* view the religious obligation of *da'wah* as the means of propagating their ideology and unifying their *ummah*, or Muslim community. According to the essay, “Illuminating the Way: Priorities in Calling to the Message” electronically posted in the *Al-Jumu'ah Magazine*, *da'wah* is fundamental to promoting *tawhid* and unifying Muslims:

There is no doubt that all our shortcomings are related to our level of faith. Many consider unity of Muslims to be one of the most fundamental issues that we should concentrate our efforts on since without strong unity Muslims are unable to face their problems...So there is no way for establishing unity, brotherhood or and Islamic society except through profound faith and righteous action.²⁷

Within this context *da'wah* goes far beyond simply promoting Islam, but toward a personal and social transformation of Islam. Dr. Al-Qaradawi effectively describes this aim in *Illuminating the Way: Priorities in Calling to the Message*:

Da'wah seeks to penetrate the innermost recesses of man to transform him into a Godly person in his conceptions, emotions and behavior by altering his thoughts, feelings, and will as well as the whole of his being, thereby shaping him into a different person. It also shakes up the structure of the society and alters its inherited beliefs, well established traditions, moral convictions, and prevailing systems.²⁸

Invoking the religious obligation of *da'wah*, *Salafi-jihadists* propagate their version of true Islam through radical mosque, videos, Internet sites, magazines, news papers, and other high tech communications systems to transform fellow Muslims to members of their movement.

Sayyid Qutb argued that the world existed in a state of *jahiliyya* and could only be revived only through the absolute implementation of true Islam, embracing the principle of *tawhid*. True Islam could only exist in states governed by rightful rulers, guided by a Caliph, and *shari'a* law. Qutb cited the life of Mohammad as the model to establish the true Islamic state through *daw'ah*, or preaching the word of God and recruiting through his exemplary actions. Qutb's Egyptian contemporary and founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Banna, further specified the stages of such a movement: "a) Introductory: Disseminating concepts and ideas among the people through oratory and writing, civic action and other practical methods; b) Preparatory: Identifying good and reliable cadre to bear the burden of initiating and sustaining *jihad*; ...and c) Execution: The stage of relentless combat and constant effort to achieve the goals."²⁹ Qutb emphasized the critical role of *da'wah* in building the faithful cadre, moving to establish a lawful Islamic state to rule the *Ummah*, and waging warfare to spread Islam and destroy

the infidels. These steps also reflect the life of Mohammad or “the way of the Prophet (*sirah*)” and have become enduring archetypes for many Islamist movements. Other archetypes endure today in the propagation of modern *Salafi-jihadi* ideology. The image of the Pharaoh is commonly applied to a ruler of a Muslim country considered apostate. The invasion of the Mongols is often used as analogous with colonial or imperial rulers such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. However, the most powerful of the archetypes portrayed in the *Salafi-jihadi* view of *da’wah* is that of the crusades or crusaders seeking to destroy Islam and take Muslim lands.

Qutb’s vision of the true Islamic state engaged in battle with the state of *jahiliyya* polarizes the world. One is either a true Muslim faithfully fulfilling all the duties of Islam in accordance with *tawhid*, or one is either an imposter to Islam (apostate), an infidel.³⁰ This binary view poses some significant challenges to the Muslim community and is a leverage point for the *Salafi-jihadi daw’ah*. According to Qutb, the House of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) is the realm of true Islam and the legitimate end-state of *jihad*, and the opposing House of War (*dar al-Harb*) is the rest of the world not under the authority of true Islam and is therefore relegated to the realm of conflict and war. For the most hardcore in the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency, the *dar al-Harb* presents the full array of legitimate targets in their *jihad*. All governments, states, and people in *dar al-Harb* are considered in opposition to true Islam and seek to subjugate true Muslims or destroy Islam all together.³¹ *Salafi-jihadists* evoking this concept basically proclaim *takfir* or the condemnation of everyone not in the *dar al-Islam* as infidels or apostates and subject to slaughter. When coupled with action, this is a very persuasive form of coercion and complies with the joint definition of terrorism. This resonate concept is very important to

the *Salafi-jihadist's daw'ah* and rhetoric, especially when combined with the Crusader or Pharaoh archetype.

As *Salafi-jihadi daw'ah* is a summons to lapsed Muslims or new recruits through word or action, *jihad*, as in the struggle “on the path of God,” and provides a persuasive means of redemption. Full participation in *jihad* is generally perceived among most Muslims as a demonstration of faith performed by an individual for God. *Shahid* is literally translated as “witness to the oneness of God (*tawhid*).” As stated before, the *shahadah* is the foundation of Islam and an obligatory testament of *tawhid* for all Muslims. However, the term *shahid* has become inextricably associated with martyrdom as the ultimate testament of faith. A *shahid* or martyr is one who dies on the “path to God” or, more explicitly, while engaged in *jihad*. Notably, reciting the *shahadah* before death renews a covenant between God and Muslims and opens the door to Paradise. Muslims seek the *shahadah* to be their last words if their death is anticipated.³² This line of logic or ideology supports martyrdom as an affirmation of supreme faith, courage, and commitment to the motivational values of the individual or group. A spectacular martyrdom, especially when publicized by the global media, becomes the ultimate testament of said faith and commitment to *jihad*. Al Qaeda’s martyrdom operations target both the victim and an audience of the attack. The audience of such an attack also has many components to include the supporting social constituency and the horrified enemy public. Martyrdom operations are pragmatic tools of asymmetric warfare which balance the powers between militarily strong forces with a considerably smaller or weaker force and impose significant psychological effects upon the enemy. Martyrdom operations demonstrate supreme strength and faith in the organizational values of one side of the

conflict verses those of the other. In an audio tape claiming the responsibility for the train bombings in Madrid, Spain, a voice states the creed repeated by various Al Qaeda affiliated organizations: “We choose death, while you choose life.”

Abdullah Azzam the founding ideologue of Al Qaeda, understudy of Ibn Taymiyya, Al Banna, Qutb, and even the Iranian *Shi’a* leader Ayatollah Khomeini and Hezbollah, introduced and promoted martyrdom as a fundamental component of *jihad* to the predominately Sunni members of the *Salafi-jihadi* movement in Afghanistan. He depicted the *jihad* as a cosmic struggle to defend Islam with significant rewards for those seeking martyrdom. In his treatise calling Muslims to *jihad* in Afghanistan, *Join the Caravan*, Azzam describes for the new *mujahiddin* special considerations afforded martyrs in accordance with the *hadith*:

The martyr has seven special favours [*sic*] from Allah: He is forgiven with the first spurt of his blood; He sees his place in Heaven; He is clothed with the garment of Faith; He is wed with seventy-two wives from the beautiful Houris [*sic*] of Heaven; He is saved from the punishment of the grave, and he is protected from the Great Terror on Qiyamah; On his head is placed a crown of dignity, the jewel of which is better than the world and all it contains; He is granted intercession for seventy people of his household...in Heaven there are one hundred levels which Allah has prepared for those who strive in his Path [mujahiddin].³³

He further integrates the call for *jihad* with seeking martyrdom and protecting Islam:

Surely, Allah will subdue the might of the Disbelievers, and Allah is mightier in power and severer in exemplary punishment. We then are calling upon the Muslims and urging them to proceed to fight, for many reasons, at the head of which are the following: In order that the Disbelievers do not dominate; Due to the scarcity of men; Fear of Hell-fire; Fulfilling the duty of Jihad, and responding to the call of the Lord; Following in the footsteps of the Pious Predecessors; Establishing a solid foundation as a base for Islam; Protecting those who are oppressed in the land; Hoping for martyrdom; A shield for the Ummah, and a means for lifting disgrace off them; Protecting the dignity of the Ummah, and repelling the conspiracy of its enemies; Preservation of the earth, and protection from corruption; Security of Islamic places of worship; Protection of the Ummah

from punishment, disfiguration and displacement; Prosperity of the Ummah, and surplus of its resources; *Jihad* is the highest peak of Islam.³⁴

Azzam's ideological and theological preferment of martyrdom coupled with the pragmatic economy of martyrdom operations significantly influenced Usama bin Laden and Al Qaeda's ideological development. Hamas and Arafat's PLO also adopted Azzam's concepts for *jihad* after the first Intifada in 1987 and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas fully integrated *jihad* and martyrdom into their struggle in the second Intifada (2000-Present) with devastating impact.

The glorification and veneration of the *shahada* integrally linked to the individual duty of *jihad* translated to martyrdom becoming an organizational value for Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda recognized martyrdom as a potent organizational value supporting its strategic plan while simultaneously being ideologically complementary to their *Salafi-jihadi* tenets. Bin Laden adopted martyrdom as the ultimate embodiment of global *jihad* and elevated martyrdom operations to the status of a principle of faith. According to Al Qaeda documents and statements, sacrifice in the name of God will ensure victory over the infidels, a transcendence of spirit over material, soul over body, Paradise over the reality of daily life, and most importantly good over evil:

Necessary Qualifications for the Organization's members: . . . 2-Commitment to the Organization's Ideology: This commitment frees the Organization's members from conceptional [*sic*] problems. . . 4-Sacrifice: He [the member] has to be willing to do the work and undergo martyrdom for the purpose of achieving the goal and establishing the religion of majestic Allah on earth.³⁵

Al Qaeda has clearly institutionalized martyrdom as an organizational value and fully integrated the tactic as the dominate doctrine of their ideology.

Strategic Martyrs and the Ummah

Al Qaeda and its affiliates conduct martyrdom operations to achieve both operational and strategic objectives. Al Qaeda is both an organization and the ideological foundation of a movement readily identified as the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency. As an organization it maintains a hierarchical command structure with military commanders, political, religious, economic and informational advisors. Charismatic key leaders such as Usama bin Laden and Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri develop and propagate a unifying strategic vision, ideology, and supporting narrative which resonate throughout an extensive network of extremists. AQAM's strategic martyrdom operations are best described as suicide attacks against the "Far Enemy" or Western political powers specifically US interest and allies. These strategic lines of operation resemble freelance or franchised, self-generating cells operating independently of Al Qaeda's direct command, yet in support of their strategic objectives. Examples of Al Qaeda's strategic campaign are numerous: The Hamburg Cell and the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US; The 12 October 2002 car bomb attack in Bali, Indonesia; The 7 August 1998 simultaneous attacks on the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; The 12 October 2000 suicide boat attack on the USS Cole in the Aden, Yemen harbor; and The London Cell and the 7 July 2005 attacks on London's public transportation system. The hallmarks of Al Qaeda affiliated strategic attacks is the usual use of multiple attackers and targets.

On the other hand, many of AQAM's operational martyrdom campaigns can best be described as suicide attacks against the "Near Enemy" or attacks focused on facilitating the collapse of a target government or state. These attacks support the operational objective of overthrowing a targeted apostate or infidel government and establishing a

local Islamic state, under the rule of *shari'a* law, uniting the local *Ummah*, and establishing a base of operations to continue the *jihad* against neighboring apostate and infidel states. Examples of these campaigns are: Abu al-Zarqawi's martyrdom campaign in Iraq and Jordan 2004-2006; Combined operations in Peshawar region 2005-2006; *Jihadist* attacks in Saudi Arabia 1996-2003; and *Jihadist* attacks in Chechnya 2000-2006.

Al Qaeda and its many affiliates do not have a command-directed recruitment program for operatives and suicide terrorists. They have never needed such an apparatus; there is no shortage of volunteers to join the *jihad*. Al Qaeda conducts selection and not recruitment and is very discriminating in selecting operatives. The traditional profile of terrorists and suicide bombers as a product of poverty, poor education, broken families, and lack of economic opportunities, mental illness, or some other personality pathology does not effectively fit the profile of Al Qaeda operatives conducting strategic martyrdom operations. The stereotype of these suicide terrorists is a desperate, naïve, single young man from third world countries, or from the fringes of refugee camps, vulnerable to manipulation and brain washing. These profiles imply that these terrorists come exclusively from Third world countries and from the lowest social and economic sectors of the third world; that they are unsophisticated and uneducated subject to manipulation in radical *madrasses* and mosques; they lack strong social or family making them easy recruits and prevent personal distractions from organizational responsibilities; and they have a dismal outlook for opportunities for legitimate employment. These assumptions prevent an effective understanding of this potent threat.

Dr. Marc Sageman, a forensic psychologist and former CIA case officer with southwest Asia expertise, has completed significant research for United States Special

Operations Command (USSOCOM) and various counterterrorism organizations on the psychology of *Salafi-jihadi* terrorists and their networks. His research is qualitative and is based on corroborated documents and transcripts of legal proceedings associated with *Salafi-jihadi* terrorists and their organizations, terrorist interrogations to include foiled suicide attackers, other government documents, and his personal scholarly works. His research represents a significant paradigm shift in understanding global terrorist organizations and the study methodology of them.

He asserts that a majority of *Salafi-jahdi* terrorists are from Arab countries, Indonesia or Malaysia, or from European Muslim communities and not from the poorest countries in the world. More than 75 percent are from upper or middle class families, mildly religious, and fully integrated into their local communities. More than 60 percent of the *Salafi-jihadi* terrorists have a higher education degree, with the preponderance in technical subjects such as engineering, computer technology, or architecture.³⁶ Of his sample, 75 percent of the men were married and fully integrated into family affairs, were professionally or technically employed, and joined their terrorist organizations at the average age of twenty six. Approximately half of the sample grew up in a religious environment and only 13 percent of the total samples were educated in *madrasses*.³⁷ Dr. Sageman's research dispels the old profiles of personality pathology derived from environmental influences and emphasizes the environmental context of radicalization.

The environmental context of potential *Salafi-jihadi* terrorists, suicide terrorists, and the social group dynamics are the predominate factors in radicalizing and pushing them into action. Terrorists participating in the *Salafi-jihadi* strategic operations generally come from middle-class families with good community and religious values and above

average educations. They are globally engaged, speak two or three languages, and have considerable computer and technological skills. Almost all of these global citizens live abroad and are generally integrated in the Western societies of their residence, primarily France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom. An additional 10 percent were second generation immigrants settled in Western countries but had strong ties with the people and culture from their country of origin.³⁸ Their empathetic relationship with their traditional homeland is significantly enhanced by readily available global communications. They are generally marginalized or alienated, and underemployed within their resident society with very little recourse to address, much less affect, their personal grievances or circumstances in their home country. They seek cultural commonality and fellowship in mosques or Muslim social groups. The collective resentment of their exclusive society helps them develop a collective identity generally based on the communal aspects of Islam.

It is within this context that mutual reinforcement leads to greater radicalization. According to Sageman, approximately 66 percent of those joining *Salafi-jihadi* terrorist organizations do so with associates or friends, or are recruited by long term-friends, with strong bonds established long before any ideological indoctrination, already participating in *jihad*. Bonds among the members of the group are further intensified through marriages among members and extended families. This social dynamic highlights the veiled role of women in promoting radicalization and the conduct of *jihad*. They broker influence and often encourage relatives, friends, and partners to join the *jihad*. This point is illustrated in an interview with Abdurahman Khadr with reference to his father's attempts to recruit him for martyrdom operations:

Three times my father himself tried to get me to become a suicide bomber. He sat me down with the al Qaeda scholar. He sat me down with the--you know, the person to train people to become suicide bombers. He sat me down with these two people and tried to convince me to become a suicide bomber. He's, like, you know, "You'd be our pride. In this family, you'd be our pride," you know, "if you do this."³⁹

Bonds of the immediate family, extended family, or potential new families play an integral role in the recruitment of the *jihadist*. In fact, the most effective path to joining a *Salafi-jihadi* group for a convert or reformed Muslim is through marriage to a spouse active in the movement.⁴⁰

A unique characteristic of the *Salafi-jihadist* is the readiness and commitment to sacrifice one's own life and inflict staggering damage on their enemies, to include the slaughter of innocent non-combatants. Al Qaeda propagates a *Salafi-jihadi* ideology promoting individual obligations to *jihad* and a responsibility to the greater Islamic community or *Ummah*. This resonant ideology also mandates action by all true Muslims and provides a productive outlet for otherwise marginalized individuals through a collective identity and supportive group dynamics. Solidarity among small, cohesive groups reinforces their organizational values and deepens the rift with the marginalizing society. Al Qaeda's ideology emphasizes the return to true Islam and the individual's struggle to live in the path of Mohammad and his companions. As new operatives deepen their religious commitment and radicalize their values they are galvanized in their pursuits by the liberal promotion of materialism and sexuality through Western cultures and global communications systems. This is not solely an individual struggle but a social one with the intense support from friends and family reinforcing the interdependency of the group. The group in turn welcomes the interdependent struggle against the evils of the infidel societies as a testament of their faith. The concept of *dar al-Islam* engaged in a

cosmic struggle with the onslaught of *dar al-Harb* reinforces their *jihadi* values. In taking action, fighting a “just” *jihad*, and faith in their organizational values help the *Salafi-jihadist* overcome the apprehension or fear that would otherwise inhibit high risk operations or self sacrifice.

Operational Martyrs and System Collapse

Elements of AQAM and many supporting affiliates conduct martyrdom operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, and most recently Algeria, to facilitate system collapse and achieve the operational objectives of the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency. In most cases these operations are conducted by terrorist organizations co-opting the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology, techniques, and targeting to achieve goals and objectives common to both the local organization and the worldview of the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency. The emblematic manifestation of this operational application of martyrdom operations is the conduct of suicide attacks by Al Qaeda affiliates in Iraq. The *Salafi-jihadi* suicide campaign in Iraq is perhaps the bloodiest suicide campaign in history. These organizations conduct martyrdom operations to elevate themselves as legitimate actors, for tactical effectiveness, and to impose local and strategic psychological effects. Martyrdom operations in Iraq conducted by *Salafi-jihadist* are associated with Al Qaeda in the Land of Two Rivers (AQIZ), the Mujahideen Consultive Council, and the Ansar al-Sunna Army and consist primarily of foreign fighters. These groups share the common goals of expulsion of coalition forces and the resultant collapse of the current institutions and government. By contrast, they do not share the same vision of the post insurgency Iraq and differ significantly with their respective operational endstate. Suicide terrorist of the traditional suicide campaigns in Lebanon, Israel, Sri Lanka, and Turkey generally

came directly from the local aggrieved social structure supporting the resistance against the governing or occupying power. However, the martyrdom campaigns in Iraq are conducted primarily by foreign *mujahdin* and very few Iraqi nationals. The few Iraqis participating in suicide attacks were recruited by, worked for, or affiliated with foreign *jihadist* as planners, coordinators, or commanders of the campaign.

According to suicide terrorism expert Dr. Mohammed M. Hafez, Visiting Professor of Political Science at the University of Missouri--Kansas City, the insurgents in Iraq span the ideological spectrum from Nationalist to Islamist with differing strategic visions ranging from system reintegration to system collapse. Many of the Sunni Islamist groups and nationalistic groups are conducting a violent insurgency to seek reintegration into the political or power structure of Iraq. Their strategic endstate does not support total system collapse, and they have a vested interest in co-opting support from the Iraqi populace. The Islamists within these groups see their *jihad* as a defensive fight to expel the occupying coalition forces and oppose the heretical Shi'a and Kurdish political parties. These groups generally target coalition or Iraqi security forces and not the local Sunni civilian populations, and they generally do not participate in martyrdom operations. Ideological *Ba'athists* and *Salafi-jihadi* insurgents are both conducting suicide campaigns to facilitate a collapse in the Iraqi government and its institutions. The groups within these two categories regularly co-opt or advocate suicide operations in pursuit of their common goal of destroying the Shi'a-Kurd dominated Iraqi government.⁴¹ The nationalistic *Ba'athists* seeks system collapse to reinstate their secular oligarchy, but the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgents seek the system collapse to establish a base from which to wage regional *jihad*. A failed Iraqi state would provide the *Salafi-jihadi*

insurgency the opportunity to create a true Islamic state and operational base with unprecedented strategic reach into neighboring Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, and Turkey.

The neighboring nations contribute a majority of the manpower to the *Salafi-jihadi* suicide campaigns in Iraq with an increasing number of suicide bombers coming from North African nations such as Algeria. According to anonymous military intelligence officials, an overwhelming percentage of the suicide bombers in Iraq are foreigners with an increasing number of North Africans joining the ranks of the *Salafi-jihadi* groups. Of the 101 identified suicide bombers in Iraq from Dr. Hafez's study, 55 came from the Persian Gulf states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt; and 15 came the North African states of Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia as citizens of France, Belgium, Italy and Spain. Only seven of the 101 identified suicide bombers were Iraqi.⁴² The *Salafi-jihadi* insurgents flowing into Iraq exhibit many of the same social characteristics of the strategic martyrs outlined above. It is important to note that the foreign mujahdin moving into Iraq from an aggrieved Muslim society is much that the Muslims living in European diaspora. Their radicalization occurs in their home country or within regional proximity to Iraq, and they are able to make contacts through networks and move to a "readily available *jihad*" in heart of the Muslim world. These recruits are generally not well trained in military operations and are fast-tracked or coerced into martyrdom operations. Their supportive social construct remains within the region and they are venerated by their martyrdom in a *jihad* which resonates throughout the Muslim world. The martyrs who travel from Europe to participate in *jihad* follow the same radicalization process Dr. Sageman describes with the exception of the integration of

AQAM recruiters within the small social group. These recruiters, or handlers, select members of a coalescing and radicalizing social group for *jihad* in Iraq and facilitate their movement through various networks and linkage with insurgent units.

Al Qaeda affiliates in Iraq oppose the *Shi'a* dominated government not only because they aspire to an Islamic state founded on *Salafi-jihadi* ideology, but because of the deep theological rivalry with the “heretical” *Shi'a*. By definition, *salafi* are the ‘righteous ancestors’ or more specifically the first generations of Muslims, and the *salafi-jihadist* seek to reestablish the religious and political order of the early days through justified war. The *Shi'a*, on the other hand, reject the legitimacy of the first four caliphs in Islam in favor of Mohammad’s son-in-law, Ali, and blame the Sunni for the murder of their appointed leader Husain ibn Ali at Karbala. This deep theological divide helps support the targeting of *Shi'a* civilians in the *Salafi-jihadi* suicide campaigns in Iraq. Abu Musab al Zarqawi, founder of Al Qaeda in the land of Two Rivers, sought to ignite a sectarian war by provoking the *Shi'a* with suicide attacks on their population. The objectives are two-fold in that the counter attacks by the *Shi'a* militias would recruit more local Sunni support to the *Salafi-jihadi* efforts and demonstrate the lack of security in the *Shi'a* dominated regime. In a letter to Al Qaeda leadership Zarqawi expresses the *Salafi-jihadi* disdain for the *Shi'a* and the objective of a sectarian war:

These [have been] a sect of treachery and betrayal throughout history and throughout the ages. It is a creed that aims to combat the Sunnis. When the repulsive Ba`thi regime fell, the slogan of the Shi`a was “Revenge, revenge, from Tikrit to al-Anbar.” This shows the extent of their hidden rancor toward the Sunnis. However, their religious and political `ulama’ have been able to control the affairs of their sect, so as not to have the battle between them and the Sunnis become an open sectarian war, because they know that they will not succeed in this way. They know that, if a sectarian war was to take place, many in the

[Islamic] nation would rise to defend the Sunnis in Iraq. Since their religion is one of dissimulation, they maliciously and cunningly proceeded another way.⁴³

Zarqawi further articulates the intent for his martyrdom campaign to ignite a sectarian war and facilitate system collapse:

We have told them [the mujahdin] in our many sessions with them that safety and victory are incompatible, that the tree of triumph and empowerment cannot grow tall and lofty without blood and defiance of death, that the [Islamic] nation cannot live without the aroma of martyrdom and the perfume of fragrant blood spilled on behalf of God, and that people cannot awaken from their stupor unless talk of martyrdom and martyrs fills their days and nights... I mean that targeting and hitting them [the Shi'a] in [their] religious, political, and military depth will provoke them to show the Sunnis their rabies ... and bare the teeth of the hidden rancor working in their breasts. If we succeed in dragging them into the arena of sectarian war, it will become possible to awaken the inattentive Sunnis as they feel imminent danger and annihilating death at the hands of these Sabeans.⁴⁴

Zarqawi's suicide campaign targeting civilian *Shi'a* population centers and neighborhoods like the Sadriya market in north central Baghdad has precipitated a sectarian war. The sectarian violence, often perpetuated by *salafi-jihadi* suicide attacks, is the greatest threat to the Iraqi security environment and system collapse.

AQAM's suicide campaigns and apparent indiscriminate slaughter of Iraqi civilians have increasingly alienated AQAM from the supporting population and many of the other indigenous insurgent groups. *Salafi-jihadi* insurgents or AQAM affiliates comprise less than 14 percent of the Iraqi insurgency, however their attacks account for more than 70 percent of the deaths and 84 percent of the injuries to primarily Iraqi civilians.⁴⁵ These suicide campaigns are effectively undermining the security in Iraq but are doing little to sway the local population to support the *Salafi-jihadi* objectives in Iraq. The source of conflict is in the massacre of fellow Iraqi Muslims by foreign *Salafi-jihadi* insurgents, committing suicide to accomplish the carnage, and targeting innocent civilians to include women and children. These friction points also resonate throughout

the Muslim world and create fractures and debate within the international Muslim community. Additionally, continuing the operational suicide campaign in light of such opposition brings into question AQAM's concern with the required supporting social construct for martyrdom operations.

¹Abu Huthayfa, letter to Sheikh Abu Abdullah (Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri) recommending improvements to Al Qaeda's information campaign with respect to martyrdom operations. HARMONY Translation (Intercepted 25 January 2002).

²Arthur F. Lykke's Army War College Strategy Model is the framework for the use of Ways, Means, and Ends: Ends are Objectives in support of an end-state; Ways are courses of actions to accomplish the Ends; and Means are the resources employed by the Ways. H. Richard Yarger, *Toward a Theory of Strategy: Art Lykke and the Army War College Strategy Model*, (Reprint US Army Command and General Staff College C200 Strategic Studies, Supplemental Reading, Fort Leavenworth, KS: May 2006), 5.

³Mary Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 4-8.

⁴Rohan Gunaratna, "Al Qaeda's Ideology," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, vol. 1(Washington, DC: Hudson Institute, Inc March 2005), 61.

⁵Ayman al Zawahiri, "Letter to Abu Musab al Zarqawi, dated 9 July 2005", trans. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *ODNI News Release* No. 2-05 (Washington DC: October 2005).

⁶*Ibid.*, 4.

⁷Al-Suri, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, 833.

⁸*Ibid.*, Preface.

⁹MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, Group Profile: Al Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers (<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=4416>) accessed 25 January 2007

¹⁰Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, *Message to the Nation of Islam*, Federation of American Scientists (<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/zarqawi040604.html>) accessed 11 December 2006.

¹¹Joseph L. Strange and Richard Iron, "Center of Gravity, What Clausewitz Really Meant," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No. 35 (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, October 2004), 27.

- ¹²Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda* (New York, NY: Berkley Books, 2002), 5.
- ¹³Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, (New York: Random House Trade Paperback, 2003), 99.
- ¹⁴Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 24-25.
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, 101.
- ¹⁶Jacquelyn K. Davis, *Radical Islamist Ideologies and the Long War: Implications for US Strategic Planning and US Central Command's Operations*, (Washington, DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, January 2007), 9.
- ¹⁷Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, 31.
- ¹⁸John Lumpkin, *Significant Al-Qaeda and Sunni Militant Attacks*, GlobalSecurity.Org, (http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/profiles/terrorism_event_home.htm) accesses 16 FEB 2007
- ¹⁹MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, Group Profile: Egyptian Islamic Jihad (<http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=3611>) accessed 18 JAN 2007.
- ²⁰Geaves, *Key Words in Islam*, 109.
- ²¹*Ibid.*, 99.
- ²²Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*, 19.
- ²³Trans. UK/BM, *Al Qaeda Training Manual*, 4.
- ²⁴Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Dar Al-Ilm, Damascus, Syria), 21.
- ²⁵William McCants, *Militant Ideology Atlas: Research Compendium* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, US Military Academy, November 2006), 248.
- ²⁶Geaves, *Key Words in Islam*, 26.
- ²⁷The quote is considered to be from a moderate source because of the introspective view as to the source of Muslim problems. Most Islamists, to include jihadist see elements of Western culture, influence, or even imperial objectives as the source of Muslim depravation. Al-Qaradawi, trans. Dawood Adib, *Illuminating the Way: Priorities in Calling to the Message*, (Al-Jumu'ah Magazine, <http://www.themodernreligion.com/dawah/>), accessed 22 March 2007.
- ²⁸*Ibid.*
- ²⁹Habeck, *Knowing the Enemy: Jihadist Ideology and the War on Terror*, 139.

- ³⁰Qutb, *Milestones*, 19.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 26.
- ³² Jason Burke, *Al Qaeda, The True Story of Radical Islam* (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd, 2004), 34.
- ³³ Abdullah Azzam, *Join the Caravan, The Forgotten Obligation*, trans. Bismillah Walhamdulillah ([http:// www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam_caravan_1 foreword .htm](http://www.religioscope.com/info/doc/jihad/azzam_caravan_1_foreword.htm)) accessed 10 November 2006, 21.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 9-10.
- ³⁵ Trans. UK/BM, *Al Qaeda Training Manual*, Lesson 2: Necessary Qualifications and Characteristics for the Organization's Member, 16.
- ³⁶ Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terrorist Networks*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 75.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 77.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ Abdurahman Khadr, "Son of Al Qaeda" Interview by Terence McKenna, *on camera* for PBS Documentary *FRONTLINE* (Winter 2004)
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Hafez, "Suicide Terrorism in Iraq: A Preliminary Assessment of the Quantitative Data and Documentary Evidence," 599.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 616-619.
- ⁴³ Abu Musab Zarqawi, suspected Letter to Ayman al-Zawahiri, trans. Coalition Provincial Authority (Iraq, February 2004), 2.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-6.
- ⁴⁵ Murad Batal al-Shishani, "Al Zarqawi's Rise to Power: Analyzing Tactics and Targets," *Terrorism Monitor*, 3, no. 22 (Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 17 November 2005), 2.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The soldiers believed they came that spring to free a part of the Middle East from the tyranny of terrorist and evil men. What amazed them was the warm welcome from the Shi'ite Muslims in the south and the Capital. The victors confidently sent in their experts to replace the ousted leadership with locals they considered more "reliable." This soon led to anger and distrust at the "invaders" and their "collaborators." Within a year, a new "terrorist" organization arose from the Shi'ite core to expel the occupiers. It armed itself with a novel type of "smart weapon" that would radically alter the nature of political warfare across the planet – the suicide bomber.¹

Dr. Scott Atran, in a parallel description of Israel's 1982 entry into Lebanon and the genesis of Hezbollah (Party of God)

Conclusions

The current framework for the GWOT as a struggle with violent extremism, relying heavily on a decapitation strategy of terrorist organizations, protecting the Homeland, and supporting mainstream Muslims, falls woefully short of containing suicide terrorism. Al Qaeda and its associated movements pose a considerable threat to the US and its strategic interests through the promulgation of suicide terrorism or martyrdom operations. The strategic and operational threat posed by Al Qaeda and its many affiliates is framed by the explicit intent conveyed in their extreme *Salafi-jihadi* ideology and capabilities demonstrated by various martyrdom campaigns. The AQAM employs martyrdom operations to achieve strategic effects and operational objectives within the context of a transnational insurgency. Suicide terrorism is more than a tactic within the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency. It is a critical capability, or more accurately an enabling dynamic which reinforces AQAM's resonant ideological center of gravity,

supports recruitment and resource regeneration, and galvanizes AQAM's strategic narrative. The greatest risks to US security is the strategic martyrdom threat consisting primarily of self-generating cells of individuals, disenfranchised by their resident social constructs, who are legal citizens of friendly European countries. The cells co-opt some or all the components of Al Qaeda's ideology and focus on striking Al Qaeda's "Far Enemies." Operational martyrdom campaigns are commanded by Al Qaeda cadre or co-opted local groups and focus on local or regional areas of operation to facilitate the collapse of a weak Muslim state in support of AQAM's territorial objectives. Al Qaeda as an organization and a movement has several critical vulnerabilities subject to interdiction or attack. These vulnerabilities include their central component of violence, inconsistencies in their ideology with Islam and the legitimacy of their leaders, the lack of territorial sanctuary, susceptible operational security, inconsistent unity of effort, and the appeal of an alternate moderate Islamic social-political constructs to their proposed theocracy. These vulnerabilities are the focus of an indirect approach attacking AQAM's center of gravity and defeating martyrdom operations.

If AQAM is the greatest threat to US security and interests through their intent, as defined by their ideology and capability in terms of the strategic and operational reach of martyrdom operations in the conduct of the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency, then defeat of either their intent or capability can only be accomplished through a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy. Countering the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency and its ideology of martyrdom is not exclusively a military effort but also includes coordinated political, social, economic and informational efforts. The popular concept that this is an ideological conflict or a "war of ideas" is an incomplete and misleading characterization of the war.

The *Salafi-jihadists* seek to control the large territorial resources once under their expansive 9th Century Islamic empire and are waging a protracted political-military war against many elements of the current Muslim world. The GWOT must therefore be redefined as a Global *Salafi-jihadi* Counterinsurgency echoing Carl von Clausewitz: “the most far reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into something that is alien to its nature.”² *The National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* correctly identifies the enemy as a “transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals”³ but fails to define the war as a transnational insurgency fueled and sustained by an extreme Islamic ideology. AQAM is conducting a violent insurgency to transform the Islamic world. Al Qaeda specifically provides the fundamental elements of the insurgency to include the leadership, unifying religious ideology, strategic communications and resources. Al Qaeda’s ideology is based on the resonant Islamic tenets of *tawhid*, *da’wah*, and *jihad* with the associated narratives and the doctrine of martyrdom. Usama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri are prime examples of the charismatic central leadership critical to the identity focused *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency.

The implications for US security strategy are significant to defeat Al Qaeda as an organization and the radical ideological movement it sustains. The ideological movement is the foundation for the proliferation of martyrdom operations. Traditional offensive counterterrorism strategies have minimal impact on martyrdom operations or suicide terrorism. The only way to defeat AQAM’s suicide campaigns is to defeat the ideology and alter the cost-benefit calculus of martyrdom operations. This can only be

accomplished through a significant paradigm shift from the counterterrorism perspective to a global counterinsurgency campaign in concert with a host of partner nations ranging from Europe and North Africa to the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Recommendations: Counterinsurgency and Martyrdom

No panacea exists to defeat AQAM's strategic or operational suicide campaigns. A comprehensive strategy to defeat AQAM's ideology of martyrdom must be based on counterinsurgency principles. First and foremost, an overarching counterinsurgency strategy must not yield to any martyrdom campaign objectives and reinforce the application of the tactic. The analysis above reveals that the commanders, organizers, and perpetrators of suicide terrorism are rational actors committed to achieving specific effects or objectives. They translate AQAM's strategy and ideology of martyrdom into action. They are knowledgeable about their operational environment and are responsive to the success or failure of employed tactics. A comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy founded on the "best counterinsurgency practices" will undermine the effectiveness of suicide terrorism, rendering AQAM's martyrdom campaigns obsolete or counter-productive. The preponderance of responsibility for executing this strategy resides in the Muslim world. The counterinsurgency strategy will attack AQAM's critical vulnerabilities along four lines of operations: separate and protect the constituent populace from the enemy; attack the legitimacy of the ideological message, narrative, and insurgent leaders; identify and neutralize the enemy; and inoculate the domestic and international community and build their resilience.

Separate the Populace from the Enemy

The first line of operation is to separate the constituent population from the enemy in order to create a secure environment, deny the enemy sanctuary, resources, and support, and provide an alternative social construct to AQAM's ideology of martyrdom. This line of operation must address the constituent populations of partner nations in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. The initial efforts should leverage NATO member nations for a more comprehensive approach to counterterrorism by addressing the basic human and social condition of their first and second generation Muslim populations. The basic human dynamics of under-employment, political and cultural isolation, and the perception of no recourse or empowerment to improve their status significantly contributes to the radicalization of entire Muslim sectors in diasporas throughout Europe. These alienated sectors became radicalized and have produced a majority of the affiliated strategic suicide attackers. The objective of this effort is to effectively assimilate and engage the Muslim community within their respective European communities and provide an alternate social construct compatible with both the egalitarian principles of liberal democracy and moderate Islam. The engaged population sectors should come to see their political status, social environment, and citizenship as a protective environment whose well being is not threatened by the state and therefore does not produce or harbor *Salafi-jihadi* inspired suicide terrorists. Dictating the social affairs of allied nations may appear to be arrogant American hegemony. However, the political leverage within the 26 nations of NATO can be applied by linking the performance of domestic reform with the need for a NATO Counterterrorism Reaction Force, the cost of more NATO force commitments in support of other member nations, and continued

funding and resources. The European Union adopted a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy to counter the radicalization and recruitment of *Salafi-jihadi* terrorists in 2005. The strategy addresses the factors that facilitate the recruitment of *mujhadin*, the motivational factors contributing to radicalization, and the social-economic factors contributing to the resonance of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology.⁴ The European Union counterterrorism strategy serves as a basic framework to build a more comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy with NATO partner nations. Addressing human rights in the nations of Al Qaeda's operational backyard is even more complex but also more necessary.

The domestic reform efforts in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and, to a lesser degree, Jordan must not have an "American feel." A coalition of credible and influential nations must leverage the governments of these countries to engage in domestic reform by linking substantial financial, political, and military support with social engagement progress and the survival of the state. The objective of these political efforts must be tailored to each country and focus on eliminating the perception of relative deprivation among large sectors of their populations. The empowerment of the social and cultural sectors of the population, enforcement of human rights, access to education, practice of equal rights, and freedom of religion provide a viable alternative to the social construct of the *Salafi-jihads*. This does not suggest the persuasive or coercive introduction of liberal democracy per the current *National Security Strategy*. On the contrary, this line of operation seeks to reform and strengthen government institutions through the introduction of transparency and the adaptation of universally recognized values and norms for security and protection. Addressing the human dimensions of security and protection are

essential for key governments to turn the populations away from the insurgents. Suicide terrorism and martyrdom operations require a supportive social construct for the perpetrators to sustain a suicide campaign. The supportive social group may be relatively localized, as is the case for the foreign *mujhadin* conducting operational suicide attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan, or displaced by time or space as is the case for the self-generating cells in Europe. Effective social and political reforms in these key countries will erode the support of constituent populations who may tacitly or explicitly support suicide terrorism and the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency as a viable recourse.

An effort that could undermine the social support of operational suicide campaigns is the exploitation of thwarted suicide terrorists captured in Iraq or Afghanistan with their respective home countries. The likelihood of capturing a high-level AQAM leader and having a public denunciation of martyrdom operations similar to the PKK's Abdullah Ocalan denouncing terrorist actions in exchange for commuting his death sentence in Turkey is extremely low. However, foreign foot soldiers have not always demonstrated absolute resolve after being interdicted on suicide missions. Many have been receptive to rehabilitation programs which reintroduce them to a benevolent social environment in their home country in return for participation in a rigorous anti-suicide terrorism campaign. A program run by the various nations of origin (any US involvement would have to be clandestine) which returns captured suicide terrorists and facilitates the public denunciation of martyrdom operations to the local population in return for various incentives could effectively erode the perceived supportive social construct needed by the suicide terrorist. Such a complementary information campaign

would portray the “foot soldiers” of the martyrdom campaigns as misguided victims of an illegitimate or distorted ideology.

At the operational and tactical level, physically separating the *Salafi-jihadist*, especially the suicide terrorist from the population, is the most difficult component of population control to implement. Strong defensive anti-terrorism measures, to include infrastructure hardening, vehicle and population control points, and security barriers, are often contradictory to good counterinsurgency practices. However, the implementation of defensive anti-terrorism measures should focus on the security and protection of the targeted population, minimize the impact on commerce development, and maintain police and other counterinsurgency forces presence with the population. The objective is to reduce the accessibility of “soft targets” (unarmed or undefended and usually civilian target) and interdict the complex infrastructure of suicide missions. Access control points should also employ blast mitigation structures and procedures to include remote concealed weapons detection capabilities. Millimeter-wave and micro-wave technologies have produced very effective hand-held and mounted concealed weapons detection systems capable of detecting individual suicide vests hidden under clothing from a safe distance. These technologies should be leveraged to isolate the suicide attackers, facilitate their capture or minimize their effects, and aid in exploiting the suicide attacker’s failure.

The Israeli security fence is designed to interdict suicide terror and sniper threats to the local population and is a good example of effective barrier implementation. Some sections in have 30 foot high concrete barriers to protect citizens from suicide bombers and sniper attacks. Other sections have chain link and barbed wire with high-tech surveillance systems to provide an economy of force security measure and interdict the

entry of suicide terrorists to key population centers. The security fence also protects three sections of the capital of Jerusalem, the most frequent target of suicide attacks, and the Samaria administration region of the West Bank.⁵ The construction of the Israeli security fence, beginning in 2003, the controversial ascendance of the Hamas' political wing, and other offensive and defensive operations, has reduced the number of suicide attacks by more than 90 percent, and the terror related casualties have decreased by more than 85 percent.⁶ The impact of the election of Hamas to replace the corrupt Fatah party was also significant in that many Palestinians perceived political recourse to address social, political, and economic grievances. Abdallah Ramadan Shalah, the Islamic Jihad leader in the West Bank, explained on Al-Manar TV the impact of the Security Fence on their suicide campaigns: "There is the separation fence, which is an obstacle to the resistance, and if it were not there the situation would be entirely different."⁷ The Security Fence has reduced the need for Israel Defense Forces conducting military operations and patrols in many Palestinian settlements and reduced or eliminated other security measures, to include curfews and security checkpoints without compromising security.⁸ Many Israeli-Arab towns along the Israeli Security Fence have noted a significant increase in economic development fostered by increased security. Barriers and transit security checkpoints have also contributed to the significant increase in the number of suicide terrorist apprehended before reaching their targets from 171 attacks thwarted in 2002, the height of the second Intifada, to 367 suicide attacks thwarted in 2004, the year after the Security Fence was constructed.⁹

In Iraq, and to a lesser degree in Afghanistan and Pakistan, operational suicide campaigns are large and complex operations with a very distinct support infrastructure.

The Suicide Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (SVBIED), or suicide car bomb, is the most effective terror weapon in these operational theaters. The decentralized nature of the tactical suicide terror organization requires the division of various activities among smaller compartmentalized groups in various locations. *Salafi-jihadist* convert a variety of vehicles to include small and fast sedans, stolen ambulances and police cars, cement trucks, and sports utility vehicles (SUVs) stolen from various organizations into SVBIEDs in specialized “factories.” These factories are usually geographically separated to avoid compromise, with one factory disassembling the vehicle and modifying its suspension and installing the trigger device. The vehicle will then be moved to another facility to be loaded with explosives and staged for the mission.¹⁰ Simultaneously, other cells conduct detailed reconnaissance of primary and alternate targets and ingress routes, train the driver-bomber, and conduct mission rehearsals, commitment operations, and brief the plan. A well designed security fence, barrier, and checkpoint plan would interdict some components of the complex and geographically dispersed suicide operation. The physical barriers with technological enhancements can also support counter-reconnaissance operations. When coupled with police or paramilitary presence patrols the movement of stolen vehicles or explosives should be canalized, detected, and identified with the cooperation of the local population. If properly applied, defensive anti-terrorism measures can enhance the local counterinsurgency efforts and undermine the operational suicide campaign with good counter-reconnaissance measures, interdiction of materials (stolen vehicles or explosives), and disruption of movement to include the attack itself.

The counterinsurgency practice of isolating the insurgent from the population is the most significant principle for the defeat of AQAM's martyrdom campaigns. As stated before, suicide terrorism campaigns rely on supportive social sectors of the population for legitimacy and reinforcement, recruitment, sanctuary, and resources. In the current environment of global communications, isolation of the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgent includes not only physical isolation but ideological and conceptual isolation. It is within the context of population control or isolating the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgent from the population that several of AQAM's critical vulnerabilities should be attacked. Coupling the social and legal reform outlined above with an opposing ideological narrative targeting the legitimacy of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology and martyrdom operations as well as provide a viable alternate social construct. The objective is to undermine the supportive social and cultural structure which would in turn disrupt their freedom of movement, sanctuary, and most importantly, the resonance of AQAM's ideology.

Attack the Message and the Messenger

The second line of operation is to attack the legitimacy of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology and the legitimacy of the leaders espousing it in order to undermine the ideology's resonance and appeal. This line of operation is almost exclusively the responsibility of the Muslim world with the US in a supporting role. At this point, it should be made clear that the US does not have the credibility to enter the internal debate within Islam about the doctrinal basis of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology. Any such efforts would support the conspiratorial narrative already resonant throughout the Muslim world. Moderate Muslim leaders, scholars, and institutions are the most credible weapons to the defeat of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology. However, the US can effectively set the conditions

for decisive debate within the Muslim world by providing technical tools and communications support. The doctrinal concept of “information operations” should be refocused to “influence operations” and should exploit the excesses of Al Qaeda’s martyrdom campaigns. Like any good sales pitch, the *Salafi-jihadi* ideological messages and narratives highlight the appealing components of their proposed ideal Islamic State and suppress the negative aspects of their violent insurgency and their rigid and intolerant theocracy. A two pronged, interdependent approach should be implemented combining the influence of global communications with vigorous debate from moderate Muslim institutions. The messages are to target major elements of the influential moderate Islamic masses to foster a very public debate on the legitimacy of an ideology which advances suicide, targets innocent civilians to include women and children, and condones the slaughter of fellow Muslims. The aim is to make suicide terror a liability for all of Islam. These are friction points throughout a majority of the Muslim world and should be exploited to the maximum extent possible.

Most Muslims embrace Islam as a religion of peace. Associating violence with Islam is an offensive contradiction. The US plays a vital role in the implementation of influence through global communications. The influence campaign consists of the subtle but consistent infusion into the global communication architecture, to include the internet, of the gratuitous atrocities committed by AQAM in suicide campaigns and the inherent contradictions with Islam. The subtleness of the message introduction supports the objectivity of the messenger and provides for broader world appeal. Additionally, after initial introduction of the influence campaign the messages should indicate a subtle but perceptible escalation in the theme of wanton violence. It is important that the global

exposure of suicide campaigns does not support the *Salafi-jihadi* information campaign but highlights the illegitimate violence in the name of Islam. By focusing on the violence of the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency, support for these violent ways, especially suicide campaigns, will wane within the constituent Muslim community.

The second prong of the influence campaign is exclusively the responsibility of Muslim leaders and scholars. The objective is to promote and defend universally accepted principles and values of modern civilization compatible with Islamic principles. As the influence campaign begins to impact the Muslim population the leaders and scholars must confront the radical tenets of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology in a very public debate within the Muslim community. The medium for this debate however, differs from the global communications architecture and must be tailored to local communications infrastructures to reach beyond the technical means to the communal and interpersonal level. The debate should address the doctrinal legitimacy of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology of martyrdom and the legitimacy of the influential insurgent leaders. Moderate Muslim leaders should be encouraged to engage the faithful on the local and international stages to reach the broadest audience possible. The influential British Muslim spokesman Abdal-Hakim Murad fosters the public debate and highlights the imperative to separate extremists from the Muslim community in a 2001 essay:

The movement for traditional Islam will, we hope, become enormously strengthened in the aftermath of the recent events, [the 11 September 2001 attacks] accompanied by a mass exodus from Wahhabism, leaving behind only a merciless hardcore of well-financed zealots. Those who have tried to take over the controls of Islam, after reading books from we-know-where,[the radical Salafi or Wahhabi movements] will have to relinquish them, because we now know their destination.

When that happens, or perhaps even sooner, mainstream Islam will be able to make the loud declaration in public that it already feels in its heart: that

terrorists are not Muslims. Targeting civilians is a negation of every possible school of Sunni Islam. Suicide bombing is so foreign to the Quranic ethos that the Prophet Samson is entirely absent from our scriptures. Islam is a great world religion that has produced much of the world's most sensitive art, architecture and literature, and has a rich life of ethics, missionary work, and spirituality. Such are the real, and historically-successful, weapons of Islam, because they are the instruments that make friends of our neighbours, [*sic*] instead of enemies fit for burning alive. Those that refuse them, out of cultural impotence or impatience, will in the longer term be perceived as so radical in their denial of what is necessarily known to be part of Islam that the authorities of the religion are likely to declare them to be beyond its reach. If that takes place, then future catastrophes by Wahhabi ultras will have little impact on the image of communities, whose spokesmen can simply say that Muslims were not implicated.¹¹

An effective approach to target both the constituent audience and potential *jihadists* is to challenge the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology for theological or doctrinal proof or *hajjat*.¹² This approach should appeal to the Muslim compulsion or obligation to act on behalf of their religious beliefs and principles and defend against false representation and interpretation. The *hajjat* debate must address the foundations of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology of *tawhid*, *da'wah*, and *jihad*. It must not dismiss the importance of these tenets but must challenge the interpretations promoted by AQAM. The sources and theories pertaining to the *Salafi-jihadi* interpretations of *tawhid*, *da'wah*, and *jihad* are not from credible religious authorities nor do the interpretations have significant basis in the Quran or *Hadith*. With the exception of Abdullah Azzam, none of the ideological theorists responsible for the ideology have any theological credentials or religious authority. Their definitions of these key tenets and calls for action ignore the greater context of these principles in the doctrine of Islam. Abdal-Hakim Murad expresses this point on another essay declaring Al Qaeda's actions heresy against Islam:

Certainly, neither bin Laden nor his principal associate, Ayman al-Zawahiri, are graduates of Islamic universities or seminaries. And so their proclamations ignore 14 centuries of Muslim scholarship, and instead take the form of lists of anti-American grievances and of Koranic quotations referring to

early Muslim wars against Arab idolators [*sic*]. These are followed by the conclusion that all Americans, civilian and military, are to be wiped off the face of the Earth.

All this amounts to an odd and extreme violation of the normal methods of Islamic scholarship. Had the authors of such fatwas [non-binding legal opinions] followed the norms of their religion, they would have had to acknowledge that no school of traditional Islam allows the targeting of civilians. An insurrectionist who kills non-combatants is guilty of *baghy*, "armed transgression", a capital offence in Islamic law. A *jihad* can be proclaimed only by a properly constituted state; anything else is pure vigilantism.¹³

Muward's essay clearly captures the essence of confronting the theological legitimacy of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology. He correctly notes that *jihad* can only be declared by a recognized religious authority. In his essay this authority is defined as the leader of an Islamic state. Fighting outside of a properly declared *jihad* is in fact an insurrection or *fitnah*. *Fitnah* is defined as "polithesist" in *Wahhabi* doctrine; however the term is correctly defined as temptation, conspiracy, sedation, insurrection, and internal civil strife within the Muslim community. The Quran strongly denounces *fitnah* and in some cases infers that the participants in *fitnah*, or rebels, seek personal gain or power through prohibited insurrection. The leaders of a false *jihad* or *fitnah* are arguably guilty of the cardinal sin of *shirk* by violating *tawhid* in their personal quest for power. This is the root of hypocrisy within the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology. Correctly characterizing the conflict as an insurgency, through effective influence operations, also reinforces the awareness of *fitna* among the moderate Muslim communities. Ultimately the credibility of an ideology not only relies on the logical arguments or the resonance of the message but also on the credentials of the theorist, leaders, and the messengers. An effective *hajjat* debate would undermine the legitimacy of the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology and the credibility of the charismatic leaders.

The Quran provides a very specific “Code of War” and prescribes the conduct of warriors and includes prohibiting the killing of fellow Muslims, women and children, and other noncombatants. Suicide attacks are also subject to scrutiny within the *hajjat* debate.

Many verses of the Quran forbid suicide and murder:

Oh ye who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities. But let there be amongst you traffic and trade by mutual good will. Nor kill (or destroy) yourselves; for verily, Allah hath been to you Most Merciful. If any do that in rancour [*sic*] and injustice-Soon shall we cast them into the Fire: and easy it is for Allah.¹⁴

Suicide is not permitted in Islam because God is the Creator of life. Additionally, both voluntary and involuntary homicide are also prohibited by the Quran with strict punishments levied against murderers. To meet the criteria of martyrdom those participating in suicide attacks must be engaging in legitimate *jihad*, specifically “in the path of God,” otherwise they are committing premeditated murder. These themes and arguments will effectively resonate throughout the Muslim communities and undermine the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology.

This recommendation is not meant to oversimplify complex Islamic concepts or prescribe specific arguments but provide a framework from which a public debate can be launched. The Quran and *Hadith* are not linear and require significant scholarly study to understand the context and accepted abrogation of the revelations. Resultantly, the responsibility for this line of operations resides exclusively with moderate Muslim leaders, scholars, and institutions.

Identify and Neutralize the Enemy

The third line of operation is to identify and neutralize the enemy through the precise application of coercive force. The center of gravity for the Global *Salafi-Jihadi*

Counterinsurgency is the legitimacy of targeted governments. The loyalty of the constituent populace is dependant upon good governance and security. Offensive operations are also required to deny the enemy the initiative and disrupt their martyrdom campaigns. The US role in this line of operation is to support and facilitate the building of indigenous counterterrorism and counterinsurgency capabilities in the “Near Enemy” states. Counterinsurgency warfare is the military component for the US and its coalition partners within the Global *Salafi-jihadi* Counterinsurgency. The most visible aspect of counterinsurgency warfare is the ongoing coalition campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan to deny sanctuary to *Salafi-jihadi* insurgent elements. It is important to note a divergence in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism military strategy at the operational or campaign level. The predominate functions of special operations forces (SOF) in the offensive counterterrorism role are intelligence operations, network and infrastructure attacks, hostage rescue, and non-kinetic support activities (Information Operations, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs). Currently significant emphasis is focused on Direct Action (DA) missions to capture or kill High Value Targets (HVTs), and exploit the actionable intelligence cycle. However, the most effective role for SOF in counterinsurgency is unconventional warfare (UW) and Foreign Internal Defense (FID). Traditional decapitation strategies, such as targeting key leaders of terrorist or insurgent organizations, have minimal effects on decentralized organizations with loose ideological affiliations to Al Qaeda or the *Salafi-jihadi* movement. Though coalition forces must maintain a formidable precision DA and intelligence capability and continue to target key AQAM leaders, specifically bin Laden and Zawahiri, the majority of coalition SOF should reorient on UW and FID to build capacity in partner nations. The pre-Iraq and

Afghanistan conflict security cooperation operations in Jordan and Egypt, and current operations in the Horn of Africa, serve as good initial models in building a counterinsurgency warfare capability in host nations threatened by the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency. Efforts should be made to standardize special operations forces counterinsurgency roles and capabilities with partner nations in NATO, Arab, and Muslim states. Coalition SOF, organized as advisors to support indigenous special police, special operations, and conventional forces in their respective operations against insurgent elements, will enhance local security and population confidence.

Terrorism is a criminal activity and the best counterterrorism practices reside in the roles of law enforcement. The legitimacy of legal institutions and law enforcement plays an essential role in the engagement of disenfranchised social sectors. Local police work is invaluable in both counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Intelligence from law enforcement institutions is cardinal for detecting, arresting, and prosecuting *Salafi-jihadi* insurgents and isolating the insurgent from the constituent population. Additional judicial reforms must address the prison environment to prevent further radicalization, organization, recruitment, and recidivism. Suicide terrorists require a significant infrastructure reliant on a supportive community for logistics, recruits, and sanctuary. An effective counter to martyrdom operations is the local law enforcement efforts to detect the key indicators of such operations. Traditional counterterrorism practices collect multi-source intelligence and disseminate that intelligence from international or national fusion centers down to regional or local authorities. The decentralized nature of martyrdom operations requires a bottom-up study of trends and indicators to support actionable intelligence. Local law enforcement authorities are best

suited to monitor the subtle indicators within an area. The analogy of the neighborhood policeman on the regular beat, in tune with his environment, is a relevant example of deploying human sensors in otherwise inaccessible areas. This approach to local law enforcement must be effectively instituted in Iraq and Afghanistan to deny the suicide terrorist freedom of maneuver.

Like attempts at influencing domestic reform with other sovereign nations, employing local law enforcement authorities as effective intelligence sources poses significant challenges to the Global *Salafi-jihadi* Counterinsurgency strategy. The United Nations Police (UNPOL) could play a vital role in the training and development of indigenous law enforcement forces and the reform of the professional standards in security and law enforcement agencies within the threatened Arab states. UNPOL security reform operations in Liberia should serve as a model for other security and law enforcement reform missions in the Middle East. Once the indigenous security forces establish the fundamental security environment, they set the conditions for good policing practices, which are the foundations of both counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. The reform, of legal institutions and law enforcement authorities are integral to the proposed social reforms and many of the same diplomatic or political strategies should be employed. Many partner nations, to include the United Kingdom, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan have exceptional law enforcement resources to offer other partner nations.

Inoculate the Populace and Build Resilience

The fourth line of operation is to inoculate the US domestic population and the international community and significantly improve the resilience. The psychological

impact of suicide terrorism attacks the public will and undermines the commitment required to conduct a global counterinsurgency. Additionally, governmental efforts to recover from suicide campaigns must be expedited. They include the reconstruction of damaged property, promoting the honor or veneration of the people killed, and the resumption of normal activities despite the threat. Consequence management in the wake of such a campaign must seek to minimize the psychological objectives of the attackers and accentuate a positive influence on the targeted audience. Suicide attacks often follow successful coalition operations as a conceptual counter-attack to parry the coalition's effects in Iraq and Afghanistan. This action--reaction dynamic is expected to continue, especially as the recommended counterinsurgency strategy makes notable progress with social and legal reforms in target states. A resilient population will resist succumbing to the objectives of suicide campaigns, ideally rendering the psychological component of the campaign ineffective. Eroding social support coupled with a resilient opponent significantly shifts the cost-benefit calculus away from suicide terrorism. The suicide campaigns of the PKK against a resilient Turkish population lost the support of the target Kurdish audience and became ineffective. The Muslim and Kurdish populations in Turkey were repulsed by the carnage of the PKK's suicide campaign and ultimately rejected the PKK's strategy. Islamic terrorists historically alienate themselves and undermine their objectives through the use of wanton, senseless, and excessive violence in the name of Islam, especially against Muslim noncombatants. Influence operations must bolster a resilient domestic and international community to endure in the face of continued suicide attacks in order to defeat suicide terrorism.

Establishing the fundamental principle of unity of effort in a counterinsurgency spanning from Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, to Southeast Asia, and no less than 35 sovereign countries is a formidable challenge. However, each constituent element of AQAM's "Near Enemy" and "Far Enemy" cannot effectively fight only within its respective sectors and defeat the adherents to the *Salafi-jihadi* ideology. In fact, AQAM martyrdom operations have historically attacked targets with the explicit intent to divide current alliances. Suicide terrorism will continue to be the weapon of choice to separate targeted states from other supporting nations politically, economically, and militarily. As previously stated, the Global *Salafi-jihadi* Counterinsurgency strategy must not yield to any suicide campaign objective, especially the destruction of the interdependent relationships of coalition partners. To maintain the required level of resilience among partner nations and enhance unity of effort in the counterinsurgency, coalition partners must establish a central executive authority. Initially this may appear to be counterintuitive because the central authority in many of the "Near Enemy" states is the source of alienation and oppression among the population. This central executive authority should be of Arab-Muslim origin, perhaps modeled after NATO with Western partners only serving support roles. Unlike the League of Arab States whose charter focuses on economic affairs, culture, health affairs, and interstate commerce, the proposed executive authority would be committed to the mutual security of its member states through political and military means. Without interfering with individual state sovereignty, the proposed treaty organization would provide the executive authority to coordinate and direct counterinsurgency efforts in the common defense of member states against the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency. A unified Arab counterinsurgency effort is a very

effective weapon to defeat the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency and undermine the propagation of AQAM's ideology of martyrdom. Enhanced stability in member states will help produce "bottom-up" intelligence critical to thwarting suicide attacks, provide positive alternative social constructs to the Muslim populations, help solidify the Muslim "masses" against the ideology of martyrdom, and remove the sympathetic or supportive social elements required for strategic and operational suicide terror campaigns.

Final Words

To defeat martyrdom operations perpetuated by Al Qaeda and Associated Movement and protect the US and its interests, America must engage in the "Long War." The "Long War" is not a perpetual struggle against terrorism but a deliberate global counterinsurgency to defeat the *Salafi-jihadi* insurgency. The center of gravity of the insurgency is the legitimacy and resonance of Al Qaeda's ideology. The critical capability of this ideology is the propagation of strategic and operational martyrdom operations or suicide terrorism. To defeat these operations requires an indirect attack upon the critical vulnerabilities of inconsistencies in their message and legitimacy of their leaders, territorial sanctuary, unity of effort, and the appeal of alternate moderate social constructs to their proposed theocracy. The vulnerabilities must be attacked within the context of counterinsurgency operations along four lines of operations: separate and protect the constituent populace from the enemy; attack the legitimacy of the ideological message and messengers; identify and neutralize the enemy; build resilience and inoculate the domestic and international community. The enemy will continue to employ suicide terrorism to defeat counterinsurgency efforts until the cost-benefit calculus reverses direction and the *Salafi-jihadi* leaders recognize the counterproductive impact of

suicide terrorism. Attacking the identified critical vulnerabilities will undermine Al Qaeda's ideology of martyrdom and set the conditions to alter the effectiveness calculus. Fundamental to the success of this long term strategy is to tactically interdict, defeat, or mitigate the effects of suicide attacks until the tipping point is reached and bolster the resilience of the domestic and international community. As with all counterinsurgencies, victory will not be achieved in decisive operations but through incremental success. It will be a generational counterinsurgency or a "Long War."

¹Scott Atran, "Soft Power and the Psychology of Suicide Bombing," *Terrorism Monitor* 2, no. 11 (3 June 2004): 1.

²Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Peter Paret and Michael Howard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 88.

³*National Military Strategy for the War on Terrorism*, 4.

⁴Ludo Block, "Devising a New Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Europe" *Terrorism Monitor* 4, no. 21 (2 November 2006): 5.

⁵Avi Dicter and Daniel L. Byman, *Israel's Lessons for Fighting Terrorist and Their Implications for the United States* (Washington, DC: Saban Center at The Brookings Institute Report, March 2006), 7.

⁶Mitchell Bard, "Israel's Security Fence" *Jewish Virtual Library* (<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/fence.html>); accessed 12 March 2007.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*, Terrorist Attacks Against Israel During "Al-Aqsa Intifada"-Graphs.

¹⁰Hafez, "Suicide Terrorism in Iraq: A Preliminary Assessment of the Quantitative Data and Documentary Evidence," 602.

¹¹Abdal-Hakim Murad, "Recapturing Islam from the Terrorist" *Islam for Today* (<http://www.islamfortoday.com/murad01.htm>) accessed 25 May 2007.

¹²Dale C. Eikmeier, "Qutbism: An Ideology of Islamic-Fascism" *Parameters* 37, no. 1 (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2007), 93.

¹³Abdal-Hakim Murad, “Bin Laden’s Violence is a Heresy Against Islam” *Islam for Today* (<http://www.islamfortoday.com/murad04.htm>) accessed 25 May 2007

¹⁴The paraphrased interpretation of verses 29 and 30 warns that our “waste may mean our own destruction (nor kill or destroy yourselves)” and “we must be careful of our own and other peoples lives, We must commit no violence. . . .Our violence to our own brethren is particularly preposterous, seeing Allah has loved and showered His mercies on us and all His creatures” according to Abdullah Yosuf Ali. *The Holy Qur’an, verses: Al Nisa 29,30*, trans. Abdull Yosuf Ali (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, March 2004), 193-194.

TABLES

Table 1. Suicide Terror Incidents, Sorted by Tactic, vs. Total Terror Incidents,
Sorted by Tactic, 1980-2006

Terror Incidents By Tactic (Suicide Attacks)			
Tactic	Incidents	Injuries	Fatalities
Armed Attack	3	137	53
Assassination	15	157	106
Barricade/Hostage	2	729	333
Bombing	947	26536	9052
Hijacking	1	127	19
Other	1	0	0
Unconventional Attack	4	2337	2992
Total Suicide Attacks	973	30023	12555

3.29%

28.68%

27.79%

Terror Incidents By Tactic (Total)			
Tactic	Incidents	Injuries	Fatalities
Armed Attack	6981	13769	12021
Arson	986	332	382
Assassination	2155	1203	2865
Barricade/Hostage	142	1460	690
Bombing	16532	84291	23766
Hijacking	130	290	329
Kidnaping	2028	163	1427
Other	158	426	152
Unconventional Attack	51	2435	3004
Unknown	409	296	540
Total Terror Incidents	29572	104665	45176

Source: Data, MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, Terror Incident by Date Analysis Tools:
Suicide Attack / Terror Attacks, 1 January 1980 through 31 December 2006.

Table 2. Suicide Attacks by Year 1980-2006.

Suicide Attacks By Year	Incidents	Injuries	Fatalities
1980	0	0	0
1981	1	100	61
1982	0	0	0
1983	7	250	410
1984	1	0	0
1985	13	111	48
1986	2	132	27
1987	0	0	0
1988	2	0	8
1989	3	11	4
1990	1	3	1
1991	1	0	13
1992	0	0	0
1993	0	0	0
1994	6	368	167
1995	7	203	57
1996	5	279	62
1997	1	200	7
1998	9	5400	299
1999	15	82	31
2000	10	216	72
2001	46	3274	3175
2002	66	1935	617
2003	75	2247	717
2004	110	4399	1730
2005	337	6460	3055
2006	255	4353	1994
Totals	973	30023	12555

Note: Compilation of MIPT Data indicates 271 Suicide Attacks from 1980 thru 2003, and Dr. Pape in *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, indicates 315 Suicide Attacks for the same period, introducing a possible 2 percent error margin.

Source: Data, MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, Terror Incident by Date Analysis Tools: Suicide Attack / Terror Attacks 01 JAN 1980 through 31 DEC 2006.

Table 3. AQAM Affiliated Terrorist Organizations

Organization / Aliases	Affiliation	Base of Operations	Classification	Formed
Abu Hafs al-Marsri Brigade	Ally	Spain, U.K.	Religious	AUG 2003
Abu Nayaf al Afghani / Ansar Al Qaeda Europe	Ally	Spain	Religious	APR 2004
Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) / Al Harakat al Islamiyah	Ally	Philippines	Nationalist/Separatist Religious	1991
Ansar al Islam / Supporters of Islam	Ally	Iraq	Religious	DEC 2001
Ansar al Sunnah Army	Ally	Iraq	Religious	MAY 2003
Armed Islamic Group / Groupes Islamiques Armes (GIA)	Ally	Algeria	Religious	1992
Asbat al Ansar / League of the Followers	Suspected Ally	Lebanon	Religious	Late 1980s-early 1990s
Battalion of the Martyr Abdullah Azzam / Al Qaeda in the Levant	Ally	Egypt, Jordan, Syria	Religious	OCT 2004
Eastern Turkistan Islamic Party (ETIP)	Ally	China	Religious	1990
Egyptian Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM) / Qaeda al-Jihad	Ally	Afghanistan, Egypt	Religious	Late 1970 / Merged with AQ JUN 2001
Eritrean Islamic Jihad (EIJ) / Abu Sihel Movement	Suspected Ally	Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan	Religious	1980
Harakat Ul Mujahidin (HuM) / Jamiat ul-Ansar	Ally	Kashmir, Pakistan	Religious, Nationalist/Separatist	Dec 2002
Hezbollah	Suspected Ally	Lebanon	Religious, Nationalist/Separatist	1982
Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) / HM of the Jamaat-e-Islami	Ally	Kashmir, Pakistan	Nationalist/Separatist	1989
Islamic International Peacekeeping Brigade (IIPB)	Suspected Ally	Azerbaijan, Chechnya, Georgia, Russia,	Religious, Nationalist/Separatist	1998

Table 3. (Continued) AQAM Affiliated Terrorist Organizations

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Abu Hafs al-Marsri Brigade	Ally	Spain, U.K.	Religious	AUG 2003
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Table 3. (Continued) AQAM Affiliated Terrorist Organizations

Organization / Aliases	Affiliation	Base of Operations	Classification	Formed
Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO)	Suspected Ally	Malaysia, Thailand	Nationalist/Separatist, Religious	MAR 1968
Riyad us-Saliheyn Martyr's Brigade	Suspected Ally	Chechnya, Russia	Nationalist/Separatist, Religious	DEC 2002
Takfir wa Hijra / Martyrs for Morocco	Shared Members	Algeria, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Netherlands, Spain, U.K.	Religious	1970s – 1980s
Taliban	Ally	Afghanistan, Pakistan	Religious	1994
Tawhid and Jihad / Jama'at Al-Tawid	Ally	Iraq	Nationalist/Separatist, Religious	Late 1990s
Tunisian Combatant Group (TCG) / Tunisian Islamic Fighting Group	Ally	Afghanistan	Religious	2000
Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (GAI) / Jamaat al-Islamiyya	Ally	Afghanistan, Egypt	Religious	1977
Al-Islambouli Brigades of Al Qaeda	Supportive	Pakistan	Religious, Nationalist/Separatist	NOV 1995
Al-Ittihaad al-Islam (AIAI) / Islamic Union	Ally	Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia	Religious	Late 1980s
Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb / Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC)	Ally	Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, Niger	Religious	1996
Al Qaeda in the Land of Two Rivers / Al Qaeda in Iraq / al Zarqawi Network	Ally	Iraq, Jordan	Religious, Nationalist/Separatist	OCT 2004
Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	Ally	Saudi Arabia	Religious	DEC 2004

Source: Data, MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, Terrorist Group Analysis Tools: Al Qaeda and Related Groups, as of 25 May 2007.

GLOSSARY

Dar al-Harb. Literally the “abode of war,” more specifically all lands not yet ruled by Islamic law.

Dar al-Islam. Literally the “abode of Islam” or the lands in which Islamic law prevails. The lands which constitute the entire Islamic community.

Da’wah. Literally means call. The promotion of Islam to both Muslims and non-Muslims that is considered to be a central duty for all Muslims. Da’wah can be accomplished by preaching or through exemplary good deeds.

Fatwa. A formal and binding legal opinion or decision of a religious scholar on a matter of Islamic law. It is the application of shari’a law (Islamic law) to a particular case or situation to be used as legal precedent. Islam does not have a central authority for the issuance of fatwas.

Hadith. Documented traditions of the teachings and actions of the Prophet Mohammad, recorded by his close companions and family, which are not in the Quran. They are different from the Quran in that they were inspired by Mohammad’s own initiative rather than revealed by God. Six collections are used by Muslim scholars as the basis of the Sunna (the way) of the Prophet.

Hanbali. One of four Madhdhabs, or Sunni schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal(d.855), Hanbali is generally stricter in its interpretations of Islamic law. Wahhabism stems from Hanbali roots. Ibn Taymiyya was a Hanbali scholar.

Haram. Forbidden by Islamic law. The fifth of five categories of action in shari’a law. Haram refers to actions which are unlawful or forbidden and punishable in shari’a law. The guiding principle in Islam is that all actions are permissible unless expressly prohibited by the Quran. Therefore God in his revelations (Quran), has declared an action as forbidden and is not subject to interpretation or modification by humans or their respective governments.

Ijtihad. An independent judgment or judicial reasoning regarding religious law and doctrine. The process of interpretive reasoning as applied to the core Islamic text. The word comes from the same root as “jihad,” which suggests that ijtihad is an “effort” to understand the Islamic text.

Istishhad. Self sacrifice or martyrdom.

Islam. Literally means to submit or surrender. The religious teaching, practice, faith and obedience to God (Allah) based on the revelations in the Quran and exemplified in the behavior and character of the Prophet Mohammad.

Islamism. A religious ideology that insist on the application of shari'a law by the state. Advocates of Islamism are Islamist.

Jahiliyya. The age of ignorance before the revelations of the Quran or specifically the pre-Islamic period in Arabia. Fundamental Islamist use jahiliyya to refer to individuals, or entire societies, that have fallen into pre-islamic state of barbarity, especially those where Muslims have forsaken God's law in favor of man-made laws.

Jihad. Literally means striving. Jihad refers to the duty imposed by the Quran upon every Muslim to strive or struggle against evil and walk the path of God. Jihad is both an inner struggle (greater) against the manifestations of sin in oneself and the outer struggle (lesser) to promote Islam and protect the faith against enemies. In the latter context jihad is often misinterpreted as a "Holy War" against infidels, Christians, or Jews that threaten Islam. However, jihad must be clearly defined by criteria from the shari'a and lead by an Imam or Muslim head of state. The principal criterion for the conduct of jihad is that it must be fought to protect the faith and not to be used for lesser temporal motives. Contemporary revivalist movements have declared jihad as the sixth and primary pillar of Islam. This declaration emphasizes the duty of all Muslims to struggle to promote their faith among the lapsed members of the ummah and the perceived threat to Islam from the globalization and proliferation of liberal Western values.

Kufr. The state of unbelief. A kafir is an infidel or unbeliever; someone who rejects or disbelieves in God and his teachings. It is the ultimate sin along with shirk (worshipping something other than God). It is often used or more accurately misused in describing all non-Muslims. The Quran specifically recognizes Christians and Jews as People of the Book.

Madrasa. An Islamic religious school. A school for religious study usually attached to a mosque and teaching a curriculum extending from the study of the Quran and Hadith through Islamic jurisprudence, recitation and memorization, and fiqh (schools of law). Full graduates of the standard eight year course of study are known as Ulama and are qualified to become Imams (prayer leaders) of mosque and make judgments on issues of Islamic law.

Mujahid. Muslim engaged in jihad. Used by militant Islamic groups to describe soldiers in armed struggle to establish or restore Islamic law to various Muslim nations. Plural: mujahidin.

Shahadah. The covenant between a Muslim and God which opens the gates of Paradise, and Muslims hope to recite the Shahadah as their last words before death. The Shahadah is the proclamation that "There is no God but God; and Mohammad is His Prophet" and is the basis for the Muslim profession of Faith. The Shahadah is the first of the six pillars of Islam.

Shahid. Literally means witness. All Muslims are considered witness to the oneness of God and Mohammad as his final prophet. This is professed through the Shahadah. Shahid is also commonly used to refer to a martyr or one who performs the ultimate testament or witness of faith in self sacrifice. It is believed that the Shahid or Martyr, defined as one who dies while engaged in jihad, finds immediate entry into Paradise and does not have to wait until the final Day of Judgement.

Salafi. The “righteous ancestors,” the first generations of the Muslim community. A proponent of salafiyya or puritanical Islam.

Salafiyya. A fundamental or puritanical approach to Islam that aims to emulate the way in which early Muslims practiced their religion.

Shari’a. Islamic law based on the Revelation of God in the Quran, the Hadiths and Sunna of Mohammad and interpreted by the practitioners of the four Muslim schools of law (Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi’i, and Maliki). Shari’a indicates God’s path to be followed and literally means “the way to the watering place.”

Shura. A consultative council of Muslims presiding over religious and worldly affairs and responsible for the maintenance of Muslim law. The Shura is prescribed by the Quran as the model for organizational leadership.

Takfir. To condemn a Muslim or Muslims as apostate or unbeliever.

Tawhid. Making one. The divine unity which Muslim seek to emulate in their personal and social lives by recognizing the absolute sovereignty of God. The belief in the oneness and uniqueness of God. This is the central doctrine of Islam and leads to its assertion of uncompromising monotheism.

Ulema. Religious scholars of Islamic law and jurisprudence who have graduated from a madrasa.

Ummah. The universal community of Muslims that incorporate the totality of all who profess the faith and supersedes nationality, ethnicity, class and gender. The ummah ideal is a community bound together in the beliefs and practices of Islam. The purpose of the ummah is to act as a witness for God through the example of obedient worship and the Muslim social relation.

Wahhabi. An adherent of the reformist, puritanical approach to Islam set forth by Muhammad ibn Abd a-Wahhab (1703-1787) in Arabia. Muhammad ibn Abd a-Wahhab was significantly inspired by Ibn Tamiyya and sought to restore Islam to a form that was stripped of all cultural, traditional, and mystical influences. The predominate form of Islam in Saudi Arabia.

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